

N°

VIII.

OF

BELL's

BRITISH THEATRE.

ZARA.

A TRAGEDY, BY AARON HILL.

Regulated from the *Prompt-Books* of the Theatres,
with a concise *Characteristic Sketch* of the Author's Life,
and an original *Critical Commentary* on the Piece.

EMBELLISHMENTS.

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|--|----------------|-------------|
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| Mr. HARLEY in the Character of LU- SIGNAN. - - - | DE WILDE - - - | BROMLEY. |

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2, Maid of the Mill—Mr. Blanchard in Ralph, and ditto.
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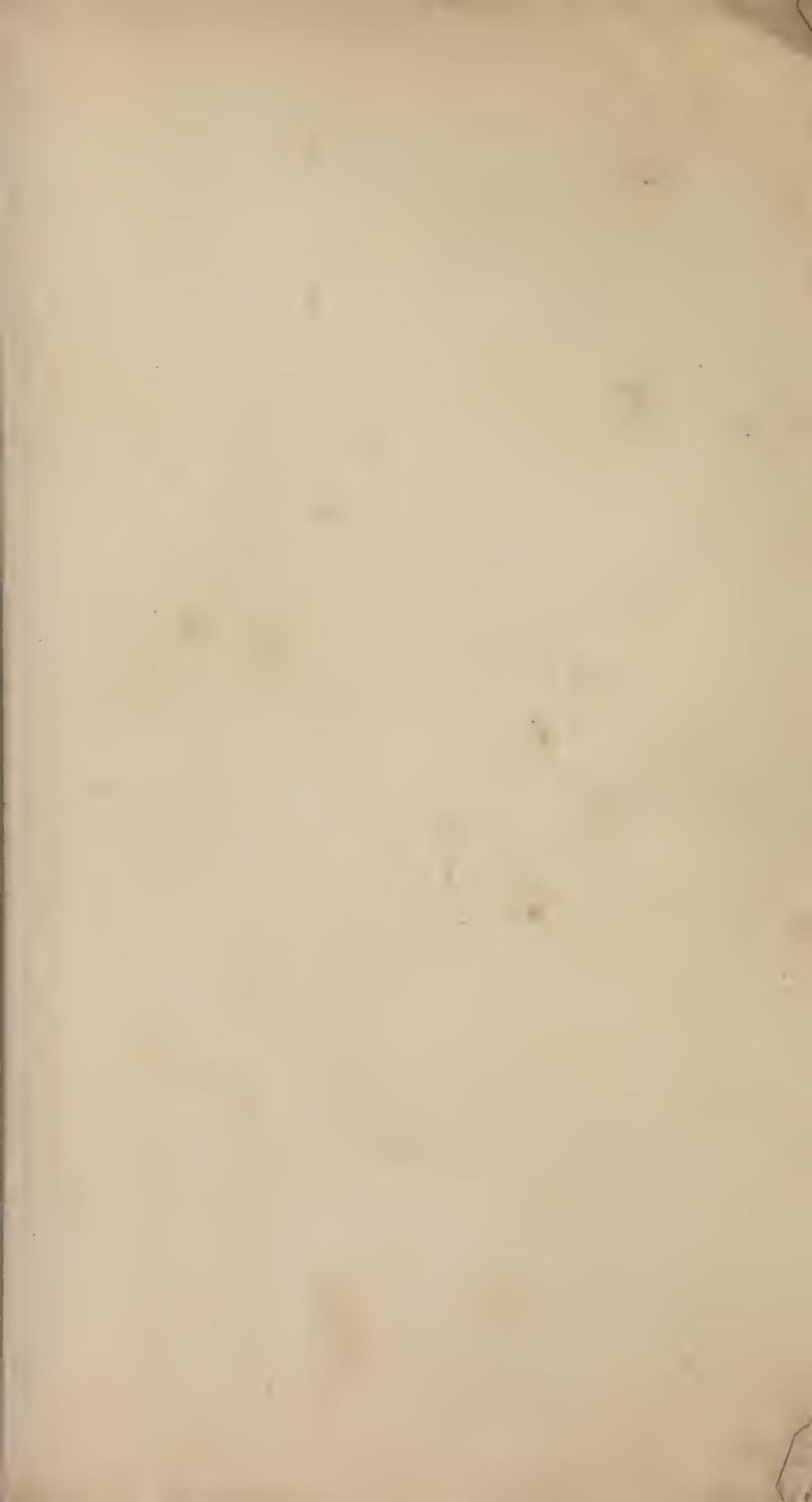
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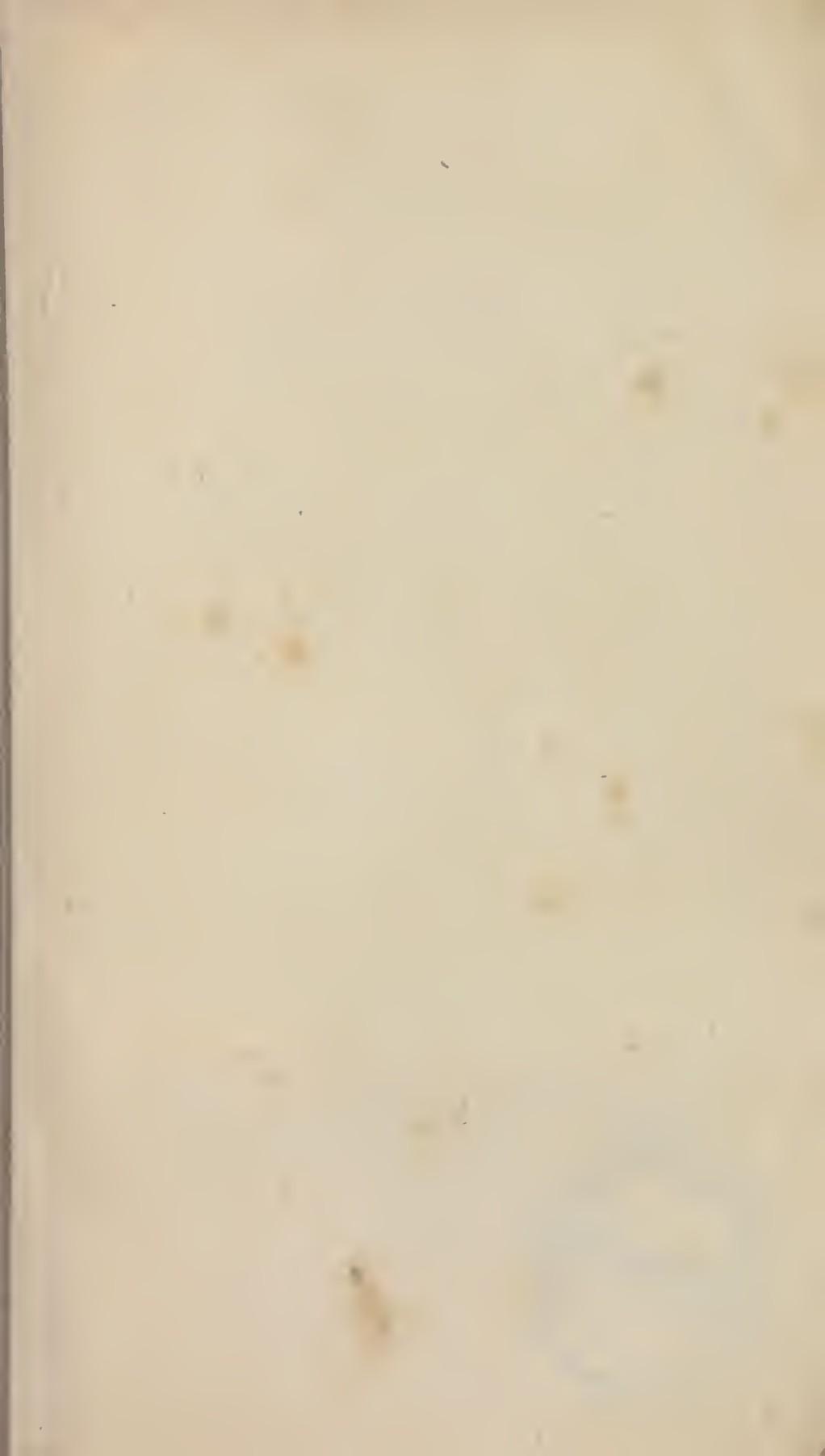
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ZARA.

A

TRAGEDY.

BY AARON HILL, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES - ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

“ The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.”

LONDON:

*Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.*

M DCC XCI.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCE.

SIR,

WRITERS, who mean no Int'rest, but their Arts;
Of undepending Minds, and stedfast Hearts,
Disclaiming Hopes will empty Forms neglect ;
Nor need PERMISSION——to address Respect.

Frank, as the manly Faith of ancient Time,
Let Truth, for once, approach the Great, in Rhyme !
Nor Public Benefit, misguided, stray,
Because a Private Wisher points its Way.

If wond'ring, here, your Greatness condescends
To ask, What's HE, who thus, uncall'd, attends ?
Smile, at a Suitor, who, in Courts, untrac'd,
Pleas'd, if o'erlook'd, thus owns his humble Taste.—

Vow'd an Unenvier of the busy Great ;
Too plain for Flatt'ry ; and, too calm for Hate :
Hid to be Happy ; who surveys, unknown,
The pow'rless Cottage, and the peaceless Throne ;
A silent Subject to His own Control ;
Of active passions, but unyielding Soul ;

A ij

Engross'd by NO Pursuits, amus'd by All ;
But, deaf as Adders, to Ambition's Call :
Too Free, for Pow'r, (or Prejudice) to WIN,
And, safely lodging Liberty WITHIN.

Pardon, Great Prince ! th' unfashionable strain,
That shuns to dedicate ; nor seeks to gain :
That (self-resigning) knows no narrow View ;
And but for Public Blessings, courts ev'n YOU !

Late a bold Tracer of your measur'd Mind,
(While, by the mournful SCENE, to Grief inclin'd,) I saw your Eloquence of Eyes confess
Soft Sense of BELVIDERA's deep Distress,
Prophetic thence, fore-deem'd the rising Years ;
And hail'd a HAPPY NATION in YOUR Tears !

Oh !--nobly touch'd !--th' inspiring Pleasure choose,
Snatch from the sable Wave, the sinking MUSE !
Charming, be charm'd ! the Stage's Anguish heal :
And teach a languid People how to feel.

Then her full Soul shall TRAGIC Pow'r impart,
And reach Three Kingdoms in their Prince's Heart !
Lightness, disclaim'd, shall blush itself away :
And reas'ning SENSE resume so-forgotten Sway.
Love, Courage, Loyalty, Taste, Honour, Truth,
Flash'd from the Scene, re-charm our list'ning Youth :
And, Virtues (by YOUR Influence form'd) sustain
The future Glories of their Founder's Reign.

*Nor let due Care of a protected Stage,
Misjudg'd Amusement, but spare Hours engage ;
Strong, serious TRUTHS, the manly Muse displays ;
And leads charm'd Reason through those flow'ry
Ways.*

*While HISTORY's cold Care but Facts inrolls,
The MUSE (persuasive) saves the pictur'd Souls !
Beyond all Egypt's GUMS, embalms Mankind :
And stamps the living Features of the Mind.*

*Time can eject the Sons of Pow'r, from Fame ;
And He, who gains a World, may LOSE his Name.
But cherish'd Arts insure immortal Breath :
And bid their prop'd Defenders tread on Death !*

*Look back, lov'd Prince ! on Age's sunk in shade !
And feel, what DARKNESS absent Genius made !
Think on the dead Fore-fillers of your Place !
Think on the stern First-founders of your Race !
And, where lost Story sleeps in silent Night ;
Charge to their Want of Taste, their Want of LIGHT.*

*When, in your rising Grove, (no Converse nigh)
BLACK EDWARD's awful Bust demands your Eye,
Think, from what Cause blind CHRONICLES DEFAME
The gross-told Tow'rings of that dreadful Name !
Search him, thro' FANCY ; And suppose him shown
By the long Glories to the MUSES known :
Shining, disclos'd :—o'ertrampling Death's Controul !
And, opening, backward, All his Depth of Soul !*

Then—breathe a conscious Sigh to mourn his Fate,
Who form'd no Writers, like his Spirit Great !
To limn his living Thoughts—past Fame renew :
And build HIM Honours they reserve for You !

I am,

With profound Respect,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

Most humble,

And obedient Servant,

A. HILL.

AARON HILL.

HE who can survey the recorded life of this gentleman, without exultation, must be dead to virtue ; He, who is not proud of the lustre it reflects upon his species, feels nothing of the enthusiasm that warms into kindred excellence.

AARON HILL was a native of the Capital, and born in Beaufort-Buildings, Strand, on the 10th of February, 1684-5. Paternally, his exemplar was a bad one, for his father GEORGE HILL, Esq. was lavish and indiscreet, and the legal right to a property of 2000*l.* a year, which would have devolved upon him, his Father so involved as to render it of no value to the family.

THE young gentleman, however *thus* unfortunate, was well gifted other ways ; he was adorned by much mental power, and promptitude that carried that power to the best account—his mind was formed for enterprize, inventive and indefatigable. He had scarcely gone through Westminster, and completed his 14th year, when he sought

after fortune in other climes, and surely with a sufficient disregard of distance, for he undertook a voyage to *Constantinople*.—His expected advancement was baffled by a mean woman as far as was pecuniary, but the advancement in the best knowledge, the *savoir vivre*, he who mix'd so much with variety of character, and possess'd the mind of AARON HILL, could not but find a commodity readily convertible into wealth.

FEW men have been more multifarious in pursuit than this—For HE made *plays*, who could also make *Beech oil*. Among his struggles after pre-eminence he sought to rival the Russians in *Pot-ashes*—and the Highlander first ventured down the Spey upon *Floats* at the suggestion and example of HILL.—He cut down forests of timber that JOHNSON could never have discovered, and shewed the English builder, that Scottish timber was perfectly applicable to ship-building.—He was occupied at once by the cultivation of the art of acting, and that of planting, and his imagination vibrated between South Carolina and the Theatre in the Haymarket.

HILL was one of those with whom POPE commenced a war, that dishonoured his great talents

—For something, or for nothing, he made HILL
dive, and arise without spot from the mud of dul-
ness; and the retort of HILL should be remembered
as the keenest characteristic of POPE's literary life.

Tuneful ALEXIS, on the Thames' fair side,
The ladies' *play-thing*, and the muses' pride,
With merit popular, with wit polite,
Easy though vain, and elegant though light,
Desiring and *deserving* others praise,
Poorly accepts a fame he ne'er repays :
Unborn to cherish, SNEAKINGLY APPROVES,
And wants the soul to *spread* the worth he *loves*.

I HAVE little more to add to this mention, but
that in marriage he was happy, and he deserved
his happiness ;—he was studious, and his labour
was not in vain ; he attracted the love of man,
and it is imagined lived strictly that life which he
believed most acceptable to GOD.—Active useful-
ness attended him till he died, this happened in
1750. The shock of the great earthquake im-
mediately preceded a shock to him fatal.

HE died in his 65th year, and was interred in
the same grave with his lady in Westminster Ab-
bey. His dramatic pieces are the following :

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|------|---------------------|---|---|------|
| <i>Elfrid</i> | — | — | 1710 | <i>Rinaldo</i> | — | — | 1711 |
| <i>Walking Statue</i> | — | — | 1710 | <i>Fatal Vision</i> | — | — | 1716 |
| <i>Trick upon Trick</i> | — | — | | <i>Henry V.</i> | — | — | 1723 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|----------------------------|---|------|
| <i>Atbelwold</i> | — | 1732 | <i>Merlin in Love</i> | — | 1759 |
| <i>Zara</i> | — | 1735 | <i>Muses in Mourning</i> | — | 1759 |
| <i>Alzira</i> | — | 1736 | <i>Snake in the Grass</i> | — | 1759 |
| <i>Merope</i> | — | 1749 | <i>Saul</i> | — | |
| <i>Roman Revenge</i> | — | 1753 | <i>Daranes</i> | — | |
| <i>Insolvent</i> | — | 1758 | <i>Fatal Extravagance.</i> | | |

ZARA.

IF it were merely from the ground-work of the Piece that this Play should be estimated, much of our Admiration would abate—Religious Differences are now neither felt with that Horror, nor do they, thank Heaven, produce now the Miseries that Bigotry and Ignorance formerly originated.

BUT ZARA has other and strong Claims—from the natural delineation of the Passions. M. VOLTAIRE was the Original Author, but even his Play is an *English* one, and the French Stage grew animated by the Transfusion of the manly Energy of Shakspeare. The present is obviously an elegant liberal Translation from the ZAIRE of Voltaire, with some trivial Alterations of Names and Sentiments.

*In this Piece Mrs. CIBBER made her Theatrical début
in the Character of Zara.*

P R E F A C E

T O T H E R E A D E R.

THE Beauties of *Nature* will be Beauties *everlastingly*.—
If they are, sometimes, eclipsed by a Cloud of ill Accidents,
they disperse the dark *Screen*; and, again, become amiable.

BUT, unwilling to suppose, we are, now, under Influence
of such a *Cloud*, with regard to *Dramatical Taste*, I thought it
more decent, (and juster) to charge its Degeneracy to the
STAGE, than to the *Genius* of the Nation.

ACCOUNTING in this Manner for the *Defect*, I have often
taken Pleasure, (when turning my Search towards a *Remedy*)
to consider it, as no improbable Hope, that YOUNG *Actors* and
AETresses, beginning, *unseduced* by *AFFECTED EXAMPLES*,
might go some Length, towards what has been said of a cele-
brated Writer—

“ *Who reach'd Perfection, in his first Essay.*”

IT required, methought, but the Assistance of a lively *Ima-
gination*, joined to an easy, and natural *Power*; with a reso-
lute *Habitude*, to BE, for an Hour or two, the very Persons
they would seem.—Such a *Foundation* for accomplished Acting,
lies so open, and so clearly in *Nature*, that they, who find it
at all, must discover it at *first*: Because, when Men are once
got out of the *Road*, they, who travel the *farthest*, have but
most Length of Way to ride back again.

YET, the Interested in Playhouses were so positive in the contrary Sentiment, that they submitted to reverence, as a *Maxim*, this extraordinary Concession, “ That *Actors must be twenty Years such, before they can expect to be Masters of the Air, and Tread of the Stage.*”

Now, there is but *one View*, in Nature, wherein I was willing to admit of this Argument: I was forced to *confess*, I had seen some *particular Stage Airs*, and *Stage Treads*, which a Man of good Sense *might*, indeed, waste a long Life, in endeavouring to imitate, and, *at last, lose his Labour!*

HOWEVER, since an Opinion, in Opposition to these Gentlemen’s, wanted Weight to make That believed *possible*, which had not, yet, been reduced into *Practice*, I took a sudden Resolution, actually to try, *Who was in the Right*, by attempting the *EXPERIMENT*.—This, I know, was a design, which, succeeding, would not fail to give Pleasure to the *Public*; and, which, *miscarrying*, could produce no worse Consequence, than *my particular Mortification*.

I imagined it reasonable to found a Trial, of this Nature, rather on a *New Play*, than an *Old one*: And, as it ought to be a Play of unquestionable *Merit*, it must have been Presumption, and Vanity, to have cast a Thought toward any Thing, *of my own*—Upon the Whole, that I might keep out of the Reach either of Prejudice, or Partiality, a *Foreign Production* seemed the properest Choice; and the *ZAIRE*, of *Monsieur de Voltaire*, offered me every thing that Nature could do, on the Part of the *Poet*: But, I had still something to *wish*, with regard to that *other Part* of her Influence, which depended on the *Player*.

I had (of late) among the rest of the Town, been deprived of all rational Pleasure from the Theatre, by a monstrous and un-

moving *Affectation*: Which, choaking up the Avenues to *Passion*, had made *Tragedy* FOREBIDDING, and HORRIBLE!

I was despairing to see a *Correction* of this Folly; when I found myself unexpectedly re-animated, by the War which the PROMPTER has proclaimed, and is now weekly waging against the *Ranters* and *Whiners* of the Theatre; after having undertaken to reduce the *Actor's lost Art*, into PRINCIPLES, with Design, by reconciling them to the touching and spirited *Medium*, to reform those *wild Copies* of Life, into some *Resemblance* at least of their *Originals*.

THUS, confirmed in my Sentiments, I ventured on the *Cast* of two *Capital Characters*, into Hands, *not disabled*, by Custom and obstinate Prejudice, from pursuing the *Plain Tract of NATURE*.

IT was easy to induce OSMAN, (as he is a Relation of my own, and *but too fond* of the Amusement,) to make Trial how far his Delight in an Art I shall never allow him to *practise*, might enable him to supply *one Part* of the Proof, that, to *imitate Nature*, we must proceed upon *Natural Principles*.

AT the same Time, it happened, that Mrs. CIBBER was fortunately inclinable to exert her inimitable Talents, in *additional Aid* of my Purpose, with View to *continue* the *Praetice* of a Profession, for which her *Person*, her *Voice*, the unaffected *Sensibility* of her *Heart*, (and her *Face*, so finely disposed for *assuming* and *expressing* the *PASSIONS*) have so naturally qualified her.

AND, to give this bold *Novelty of Design* all its necessary Furtherance, Mr. FLEETWOOD, who professes the most generous Inclinations for *Improvement* of his troublesome Province, very willingly concurred in whatever could, on his Part, be of Use to the *Experiment*.

BEHOLD, in this little *Detail*, from what Motive I have taken upon me to throw one of the finest of French Plays upon the Public.—If my Expectations are not strangely deceived, it will be found, by the Event, whether our Taste for true Tragedy is declined; or the true Art of acting it forgotten.

FROM the First I can have nothing to conclude, but that my Judgment has been weak, and mistaken.

BUT, if the Last proves the Case, I shall flatter myself, that those Persons of Quality, from whose *imaginary Want of Discernment* some People have not blushed to DERIVE their dull Qualities, will, in Right of their insulted Understanding, EXACT, for the future, a warm and toilsome Exertion, of the Strong and the Natural, though at the Cost of the Lazy and Affected.

THIS would awaken, at once, the *Reflection* of many, who have it in their POWER to be moving, and natural Actors; and, by effectually convincing them, that their present Opinion is wrong, bring 'em over (for their own, and the Public Advantage) to embrace and succeed by a *New* one.

SUCH a Step towards reforming the Theatre, would draw on, (as a Consequence) many of its nobler Improvements—For, where Emotions are keenest, the Delight becomes greatest; and to whatever most charms, we most closely adhere, and encourage it most actively.

IF, in translating this excellent Tragedy, I have regarded in some Places the Soul, and in others the Letter of the Original, Monsieur de Voltaire, who has made himself a very capable Judge both of our Language and Customs, will indulge me that Latitude; except he should, in observing some Alterations I have made, in his Names and his Diction, forget that their Motives are to be found in the Turn of our National Difference.

After what I have said of the Playhouses, it would be Injustice not to *declare*, that I exclude from the Censure of speaking or acting *unnaturally*, any one of the Persons who have been cast into ZARA—And in particular, I must say *This* of TWO of them; that Mr. MILWARD, who is already a very excellent, and hourly rising to be an accomplished Actor, has a Voice that both comprehends, and expresses, *the utmost Compass of HARMONY*.—And Mr. CIBBER discerningly pursued through the numberless Extent of his Walks, is an Actor of as unlimitted a *Compass of GENIUS*, as ever I saw on the Stage; and is *barely* received, as he deserves, when the Town is most favourable.

PROLOGUE.

THE French, howe'er mercurial they may seem,
Extinguish half their fire, by critic phlegm:
While English Writers Nature's Freedom claim,
And warm their scenes with an ungovern'd flame:
'Tis strange that Nature never should inspire
A Racine's judgment with a Shakspeare's fire!

Howe'er to-night—(to promise much we're loth)
But—you've a chance, to have a taste of both.
From English plays, Zara's French author fir'd,
Confess'd his muse beyond herself, inspir'd;
From rack'd Othello's rage he rais'd his style,
And snatch'd the brand that lights this tragic pile:
Zara's success his utmost hopes outflew,
And a twice twentieth weeping audience drew.

As for our English friend, he leaves to you,
Whate'er may seem to his performance due;
No views of gain his hopes or fears engage,
He gives a child of leisure to the stage;
Willing to try, if yet, forsaken Nature,
Can charm, with any one remember'd feature.

Thus far, the author speaks—but now, the player,
With trembling Heart, prefers his humble prayer.
To-night, the greatest venture of my life,
Is lost or sav'd, as YOU receive—a wife:

*If time, you think, may ripen her to merit,
With gentle smiles, support her wav'ring spirit.
Zara in France, at once an actress rais'd,
Warm'd into skill, by being kindly prais'd :
O ! could such wonders here from favour flow,
How would our Zara's heart with transport glow !
But she, alas ! by juster fears oppress'd,
Begs but your bare endurance, at the best,
Her unskill'd tongue would simple Nature speak,
Nor dares her bounds, for false applauses break.
Amidst a thousand faults, her best pretence
To please——is unpresuming innocence.
When a chaste heart's distress your grief demands,
One silent tear outweighs a thousand hands,
If she conveys the pleasing passions RIGHT,
Guard and support her, this decisive night ;
If she MISTAKES—or, finds her strength too small,
Let interposing pity——break her fall.
In you it rests, to save her, or destroy,
If she draws tears from You, I weep—for Joy.*

Dramatis Personae.*

DRUR Y- LANE.

Men.

| | | |
|--|-------|-----------------|
| OSMAN, Sultan of Jerusalem, | - - - | Mr. Kemble. |
| LUSIGNAN, last of the blood of the Christian kings of Jerusalem, | - - - | Mr. Bensley. |
| NERESTAN, } French officers. | - - - | Mr. Barrymore. |
| CHATILLON, } | - - - | Mr. Aickin. |
| ORASMIN, Minister to the Sultan, | - - | Mr. Packer. |
| MELIDOR, an officer of the Seraglio, | - - | Mr. Phillimore. |

Women.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----|--------------|
| ZARA, } | Slaves to the Sultan, | - - | Miss Kemble. |
| SELIMA, } | | - - | Mrs. Ward. |

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

| | | |
|--|-------|----------------|
| OSMAN, Sultan of Jerusalem, | - - - | Mr. Wroughton. |
| LUSIGNAN, last of the blood of the Christian kings of Jerusalem, | - - - | Mr. Henderson. |
| NERESTAN, } French officers, | - - - | Mr. Davies. |
| CHATILLON, } | - - - | Mr. Hull. |
| CRASMIN, Minister to the Sultan, | - - | Mr. Fearon. |
| MELIDOR, an officer of the Seraglio, | - - | Mr. Thompson. |

Women.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----|----------------|
| ZARA, } | Slaves to the Sultan, | - - | Mrs. Pope. |
| SELIMA, } | | - - | Mrs. Inchbald. |

* These were the *Dramatis Personae* the last time of performing this Piece.



ZARA.

Act I. SCENE I.

ZARA and SELIMA.

Selima.

IT moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart !
Your peace of mind increases with your charms ;
Tears now no longer shade your eyes soft lustre :
You meditate no more those happy climes
To which Nerestan will return to guide you.
You talk no more of that gay nation now,
Where men adore their wives, and woman's power
Draws rev'rence from a polish'd people's softness :
Their husbands' equals, and their lovers' queens !
Free without scandal ; wise without restraint ;
“ Their virtue due to nature, not to fear.”
Why have you ceas'd to wish this happy change ?
A barr'd seraglio !—sad, unsocial life !
Scorn'd, and a slave ! All this has lost its terror ;
And Syria rivals, now, the banks of Seine !

Zar. Joys which we do not know, we do not wish,

My fate's bound in by Sion's sacred wall :
 Clos'd from my infancy within this palace,
 Custom has learnt, from time, the power to please.
 I claim no share in the remoter world, 21
 The sultan's property, his will my law ;
 Unknowing all but him, his power, his fame ;
 To live his subject is my only hope,
 All else, an empty dream.—

Sel. Have you forgot
 Absent Nerestan then? whose gen'rous friendship
 So nobly vow'd redemption from your chains!
 How oft have you admir'd his dauntless soul !
 Osman, his conqu'ror, by his courage charm'd,
 Trusted his faith, and on his word releas'd him:
 Tho' not return'd in time—we yet expect him.
 Nor had his noble journey other motive,
 Than to procure our ransom.—And is this,
 This dear, warm hope, become an idle dream ?

Zar. Since after two long years he not returns,
 'Tis plain his promise stretch'd beyond his power.
 A stranger and a slave, unknown, like him,
 Proposing much, means little ;—talks and vows,
 Delighted with a prospect of escape :— 40
 He promis'd to redeem ten Christians more,
 And free us all from slavery !—I own
 I once admir'd the unprofitable zeal,
 But now it charms no longer.—

Sel. What if yet,
 He, faithful should return, and hold his vow ;
 Would you not, then—

Zar. No matter—Time is past,
And every thing is chang'd——

Sel. But, whence comes this?

Zar. Go—'twere too much to tell thee Zara's fate:
The sultan's secrets, all, are sacred here :
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forc'd to quit fair Jordan's flow'ry bank ;
Heav'n, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Rais'd me to comfort by a pow'rful hand :
This mighty Osman!——

Sel. What of him?

Zar. This sultan,
This conqueror of the Christians, loves——

60

Sel. Whom ?

Zar. Zara!——

Thou blushest, and I guess thy thoughts accuse me :
But, know me better——'twas unjust suspicion.
All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with 'em :
Reason and pride, those props of modesty,
Sustain my guarded heart, and strengthen virtue ;
“ Rather than sink to infamy, let chains
“ Embrace me with a joy, such love denies :”
No——I shall now astonish thee ;——his greatness
Submits to own a pure and honest flame.
Among the shining crowds, which live to please him,
His whole regard is fix'd on me alone :
He offers marriage ; and its rites now wait
To crown me empress of this eastern world.

Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all :
My heart is not surpris'd, but struck to hear it.
If to be empress can complete your happiness, 80
I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.

Zar. Be still my equal—and enjoy my blessings ;
For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.

Sel. Alas ! but Heaven ! will it permit this marriage ?

Will not this grandeur, falsely call'd a bliss,
Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart ?
Have you forgot you are of Christian blood ?

Zar. Ah me ! What hast thou said, why wouldest thou thus

Recall my wav'ring thoughts ? How know I, what,
Or whence I am ? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
Conceal'd me from myself, and from my blood.

Sel. Nerestan, who was born a Christian, here,
Asserts, that you, like him, had Christian parents ;
Besides—that cross, which, from your infant years
Has been preserv'd, was found upon your bosom,
As if design'd by Heaven, a pledge of faith
Due to the God you purpose to forsake !

Zar. Can my fond heart, on such a feeble proof,
Embrace a faith, abhorr'd by him I love ?
I see too plainly custom forms us all ; 100
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fix'd belief,
Are consequences of our place of birth :
Born beyond Ganges, I had been a Pagan,
In France a Christian, I am here a Saracen :
'Tis but instruction, all ! Our parents' hand

Writes on our heart the first faint characters,
Which time, re-tracing, deepens into strength,
That nothing can efface, but death or Heaven!—
Thou wer't not made a pris'ner in this place,
'Till after reason, borrowing force from years,
Had lent its lustre to enlighten faith :—
For me, who in my cradle was their slave,
Thy Christian doctrines were too lately taught me :
Yet, far from having lost the rev'rence due,
This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
Strikes thro' my heart a kind of awful fear !
I honour, from my soul, the Christian laws,
Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
Melt nations into brotherhood ;—no doubt
Christians are happy ; and 'tis just to love them. 120

Sel. Why have you, then, declar'd yourself their foe?
Why will you join your hand with this proud Osman's?
Who owes his triumph to the Christians' ruin !

Zar. Ah!—who could slight the offer of his heart ?
Nay ;—for I mean to tell thee all my weakness ;
Perhaps I had, ere now, profess'd thy faith,
But Osman lov'd me—and I've lost it all :—
I think on none but Osman—my pleas'd heart,
Fill'd with the blessing, to be lov'd by him,
Wants room for other happiness. “ Place thou
“ Before thy eyes, his merit and his fame,
“ His youth, yet blooming but in manhood's dawn ;
“ How many conquer'd kings have swell'd his pow'r!
“ Think, too, how lovely ! how his brow becomes
“ This wreath of early glories !”—Oh, my friend !

I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me:
No—to be charm'd with that were thanks too humble!
Offensive tribute, and too poor for love!
'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown:
I love not in him aught besides himself. 140
Thou think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion:
But, had the will of Heav'n less bent to bless him,
Doom'd Osman to my chains, and me to fill
The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretchedness
Catch and consume my wishes, but I would—
To raise me to myself, descend to him.

"Sel. Hark! the wish'd music sounds—'Tis he—
he comes— [Exit Selima.]

"Zar. My heart prevented him, and found him near:

"Absent two whole long days, the slow-pac'd hour
"At last is come, and gives him to my wishes!"

[A grand m

[A grand march.

Enter OSMAN, reading a paper, which he re-delivers to ORASMIN; with Attendants.

Osm. Wait my return—or, should there be a cause
That may require my presence, do not fear
To enter; ever mindful, that my own

[Exit Oras. &c.]

Follows my people's happiness.—At length,
Cares have releas'd my heart—to love and Zara.

Zar. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
Of your imperial image—every where
You reign triumphant: memory supplies

Reflexion with your power ; and you, like Heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious. 160

Osm. The Sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not ;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me :
I know our prophet smiles on am'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire ;
I know, that at my will I might possess ;
That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
I might look down to my surrounded feet,
And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel ;
I can look round, and count a hundred kings,
Unconquer'd by themselves, and slaves to others :
Hence was Jerusalem to Christians lost ;
“ But Heaven, to blast that unbelieving race,
“ Taught me to be a king, by thinking like one.”
Hence from the distant Euxine to the Nile,
The trumpet's voice has wak'd the world to war ;
Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reach'd
me ; 180

For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love ;
Glory and Zara join—and chārm together.

Zar. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
This passion, so unlike your country's customs.

Osm. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's cus-
toms ;
The jealousy, the faintness, the distrust,

The proud, superior coldness of the east.
 I know to love you, Zara, with esteem ;
 To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
 Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart,
 And dare inform you, that, 'tis all your own :
 My joys must all be yours ; only my cares
 Shall lie conceal'd within—and reach not Zara.

Zar. Oblig'd by this excess of tenderness,
 How low, how wretched was the lot of Zara !
 Too poor with aught, but thanks, to pay such blessings !

Osm. Not so—I love—and would be lov'd again ;
 Let me confess it, I possess a soul,
 That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
 I should believe you hated, had you power 200
 To love with moderation : 'tis my aim,
 In every thing, to reach supreme perfection.
 If, with an equal flame, I touch your heart,
 Marriage attends your smile—But know, 'twill make
 Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.

Zar. Ah, sir ! if such a heart as gen'rous Osman's
 Can, from my will, submit to take its bliss,
 What mortal ever was decreed so happy !
 Pardon the pride, with which I own my joy ;
 Thus wholly to possess the man I love !
 To know, and to confess his will my fate !
 To be the happy work of his dear hands !
 'To be—

Enter ORASMIN.

Osm. Already interrupted ! What ?
 Who ?—Whence ?

Oras. This moment, sir, there is arriv'd
That Christian slave, who, licens'd on his faith,
Went hence to France—and, now return'd, prays au-
dience.

Zar. [Aside.] Oh, Heaven!

199

Osm. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not?

Oras. He waits without. No Christian dares ap-
proach

This place, long sacred to the Sultan's privacies.

Osm. Go—bring him with thee—monarchs, like the
sun,

Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen;
With forms and rev'rence, let the great approach us;
Not the unhappy;—every place alike,
Gives the distress'd a privilege to enter.—[Exit *Oras.*
I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings insensibly to tyrants.

Re-enter ORASMIN with NERESTAN.

Ner. Imperial Sultan! honour'd, ev'n by foes!
See me return'd, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a Christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten Christian captives, pris'ners here.
You promis'd, Sultan, if I should return,
To grant their rated liberty:—Behold,
I am return'd, and they are yours no more.
I would have stretch'd my purpose to myself,
But fortune has deny'd it;—my poor all

240

C iiij

Suffic'd no further, and a noble poverty
 Is now my whole possession.—I redeem
 The promis'd Christians; for I taught 'em hope:
 But, for myself, I come again your slave,
 To wait the fuller hand of future charity.

Osm. Christian! I must confess thy courage charms me?

But let thy pride be taught, it treads too high,
 When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
 Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
 Their unaccepted ransoms, join'd with gifts,
 Fit to reward thy purpose; instead of ten,
 Demand a hundred Christians; they are thine:
 Take 'em, and bid 'em teach their haughty country,
 They left some virtue among Saracens.—

Be Lusignan alone excepted—He
 Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
 To my Jerusalem—that claim, his guilt!

“ Such is the law of states; had I been vanquish'd,
 “ Thus had he said of me.” I mourn his lot,

Who must in fetters, lost to day-light, pine, 260
 And sigh away old age in grief and pain.

For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
 Were to dishonour language;—she's a prize
 Above thy purchase:—all the Christian realms,
 With all their kings to guide 'em, would unite
 In vain, to force her from me—Go, retire—

Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
 I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
 Unhappy, poor, old man—

Osm. Was I not heard ?
Have I not told thee, Christian, all my will ?
What if I prais'd thee !—This presumptuous virtue,
Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride ;
Be gone—and when to-morrow's sun shall rise
On my dominions, be not found—too near me.

[Exit Nerestan.]

Zar. [Aside.] Assist him, Heaven !

Osm. Zara, retire a moment—
Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,
While I give orders to prepare the pomp
That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne. 280

[Leads her out, and returns.]

Orasmin ! didst thou mark th' imperious slave ?
What could he mean ?—he sigh'd—and, as he went,
'Turn'd and look'd back at Zara !—didst thou mark it ?

Oras. Alas ! my sovereign master ! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.

Osm. Jealousy, said'st thou ? I disdain it :—No !
Distrust is poor ; and a misplac'd suspicion
Invites and justifies the falsehood fear'd.—
Yet, as I love with warmth—so, I could hate !
But Zara is above disguise and art :—

“ My love is stronger, nobler, than my power.”
Jealous !—I was not jealous !—If I was,
I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown
Remembrance of the word, and of the image :
My heart is fill'd with a diviner flame.—
Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials.
“ Zara to careful empire joins delight.”

I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,
Then, all the smiling day is love and Zara's.

[Exit Orasmin.

Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery press'd, 300
In proud, unsocial misery, unbless'd,
Wou'd, but for love's soft influence, curse their
throne,

And, among crowded millions, live alone. [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

NERESTAN, CHATILLON.

Chatillon.

MATCHLESS Nerestan! generous and great!
You, who have broke the chains of hopeless slaves!
“ You, Christian saviour! by a Saviour sent!”
Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight;
The grateful weepers wait to clasp your knees,
They throng to kiss the happy hand that sav'd 'em:
Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.

Ner. Illustrious Chatillon! this praise o'erwhelms
me;

What have I done beyond a Christian's duty;
Beyond what you would, in my place, have done?

Chat. True—it is every honest Christian's duty;
Nay, 'tis the blessing of such minds as ours,

For others' good to sacrifice our own.—
Yet, happy they, to whom Heav'n grants the power,
To execute, like you, that duty's call !
For us—the relicks of abandon'd war,
Forgot in France, and, in Jerusalem,
Left to grow old in fetters,—Osman's father
Consign'd us to the gloom of a damp dungeon, 20
Where, but for you, we must have groan'd out life,
And native France have bless'd our eyes no more.

Ner. The will of gracious Heav'n, that soften'd
Osman,

Inspir'd me for your sakes :—But, with our joy,
Flows, mix'd, a bitter sadness—I had hop'd
To save from their perversion, a young beauty,
Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
Was made a slave by cruel Noradin ;
When, sprinkling Syria with the blood of Christians,
Cæsarea's walls saw Lusignan surpriz'd,
And the proud crescent rise in bloody triumph.
From this seraglio having young escap'd,
Fate, three years since, restor'd me to my chains;
Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
I flatter'd my fond hope with vain resolves,
To guide the lovely Zara to that court
Where Lewis has establis'd virtue's throne :
But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman ;
Zara herself forgets she is a Christian,
And loves the tyrant Sultan !—Let that pass : 40
I mourn a disappointment still more cruel ;
The prop of all our Christian hope is lost !

Chat. Dispose me at your will—I am your own.

Ner. Oh, Sir, great Lusignan, so long their captive,

That last of an heroic race of kings!

That warrior, whose past fame has fill'd the world!
Osman refuses to my sighs for ever!

Chat. Nay, then we have been all redeem'd in vain;
Perish that soldier who would quit his chains,
And leave his noble chief behind in fetters.

Alas! you know him not as I have known him;
Thank Heav'n, that plac'd your birth so far remov'd
From those detested days of blood and woe:
But I, less happy, was condemned to see
Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down—and all
Our pious fathers' labours lost in ruins!
Heav'n! had you seen the very temple rifled!
The sacred sepulchre itself profan'd!
Fathers with children mingled, flame together!
And our last king, oppress'd with age and arms, 60
Murder'd, and bleeding o'er his murder'd sons!
Then Lusignan, sole remnant of his race,
Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,
Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,
The conqu'rors and the conquer'd, groans and death!
Dreadful—and, waving in his hand his sword,
Red with the blood of infidels, cry'd out,
This way, ye faithful Christians! follow me.—

Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat!

Chat. 'Twas Heav'n, no doubt, that sav'd and led
him on;

Pointed his path, and march'd our guardian guide :
We reach'd Cæsarea—there the general voice
Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws ;
Alas ! 'twas vain—Cæsarea could not stand
Whien Sion's self was fallen!—we were betray'd ;
And Lusignan condemn'd, to length of life,
In chains, in damps, and darkness, and despair :
“ Yet great, amidst his miseries, he look'd,
“ As if he could not feel his fate himself,
“ But as it reach'd his followers. And shall we, 80
“ For whom our gen'rous leader suffer'd this,
“ Be vilely safe, and dare be bless'd without him ?”

Ner. Oh ! I should hate the liberty he shar'd not.
I knew too well the miseries you describe,
For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
Cæsarea lost, and Saracens triumphant,
Were the first objects which my eyes e'er look'd on.
Hurried, an infant, among other infants,
Snatch'd from the bosoms of their bleeding mothers,
A temple sav'd us, till the slaughter ceas'd ;
Then were we sent to this ill-fated city,
Here, in the palace of our former kings,
To learn, from Saracens, their hated faith,
And be completely wretched.—Zara, too,
Shar'd this captivity ; we both grew up
So near each other, that a tender friendship
Endear'd her to my wishes : My fond heart—
Pardon its weakness, bleeds to see her lost,
And, for a barb'rous tyrant, quit her God !

Chat. Such is the Saracens', too fatal, policy ! 100

Watchful seducers, still, of infant weakness :
 “ Happy that you so young escap’d their hands ! ”
 But let us think——May not this Zara’s int’rest,
 Loving the Sultan, and by him belov’d,
 For Lusignan procure some softer sentence ?
 “ The wise and just, with innocence, may draw
 “ Their own advantage from the guilt of others.”

Ner. How shall I gain admission to her presence ?
 Osman has banish’d me—but that’s a trifle ;
 Will the seraglio’s portals open to me ?
 Or, could I find that easy to my hopes,
 What prospect of success from an apostate ?
 On whom I cannot look without disdain ;
 “ And who will read her shame upon my brow.”
 The hardest trial of a generous mind
 Is, to court favours from a hand it scorns.

Chat. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.

Ner. Well—it shall be attempted—Hark ! who’s
 this ?

Are my eyes false ; or, is it really she ?

Enter ZARA.

Zar. Start not, my worthy friend ! I come to seek
 you ;

120

The Sultan has permitted it ; fear nothing :—
 But to confirm my heart which trembles near you,
 Soften that angry air, nor look reproach ;
 Why should we fear each other, both mistaking ?
 Associates from our birth, one prison held us,
 One friendship taught affliction to be calm,

'Till Heav'n thought fit to favour your escape,
And call you to the fields of happier France ;
Thence, once again, it was my lot to find you
A pris'ner here ; where, hid amongst a crowd
Of undistinguish'd slaves, with less restraint,
I shar'd your frequent converse ; ——
It pleas'd your pity, shall I say your friendship ?
Or rather, shall I call it generous charity ?
To form that noble purpose, to redeem
Distressful Zara—you procur'd my ransom,
And with a greatness that out-soar'd a crown,
Return'd yourself a slave, to give me freedom ;
But Heav'n has cast our fate for different climes :
Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever ; 140
Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,
I shall with frequent tears remember yours ;
Your goodness will for ever sooth my heart,
And keep your image still a dweller there :
Warm'd by your great example to protect
That faith, that lifts humanity so high,
I'll be a mother to distressful Christians.

Ner. How ! — You protect the Christians ! you, who
can

Abjure their saving truth, and coldly see
Great Lusignan, their chief, die slow in chains !

Zar. To bring him freedom you behold me here ;
You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.

Chat. Shall I then live to bless that happy hour ?

Ner. Can Christians owe so dear a gift to Zara ?

Zar. Hopeless I gathered courage to intreat

The Sultan for his liberty—amaz'd,
 So soon to gain the happiness I wish'd !
 See where they bring the good old chief grown dim
 With age, by pain and sorrows hasten'd on !

Chat. How is my heart dissolv'd with sudden joy !

‘ *Zar.* I long to view his venerable face,
 ‘ But tears, I know not why, eclipse my sight.
 ‘ I feel, methinks, redoubled pity for him ;
 ‘ But, I, alas ! myself have been a slave ;
 ‘ And when we pity woes which we have felt,
 ‘ ’Tis but a partial virtue !

“ *Ner.* Amazement !—Whence this greatness in an infidel !”

Enter LUSIGNAN led in by two Guards.

Lus. Where am I ? From the dungeon's depth
 what voice

Has call'd me to revisit long-lost day ?
 Am I with Christians ?—I am weak—forgive me,
 And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years ;
 My miseries have worn me more than age.

Am I in truth at liberty ? [Seating himself.]

Chat. You are ;

And every Christian's grief takes end with yours.

Lus. O, light ! O, dearer far than light, that voice !
Chatillon, is it you ? my fellow martyr !
 And shall our wretchedness, indeed, have end ?
 In what place are we now !—my feeble eyes,
 Disus'd to day-light, long in vain to find you. 180

Chat. This was the palace of your royal fathers :

'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.

Zar. The master of this place—the mighty Osman,
Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.

This gen'rous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you,
Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
Brought the vow'd ransoms of ten Christian slaves,
Himself contented to remain a captive :
But Osman, charm'd by greatness like his own,
To equal what he lov'd, has giv'n him you.

Lus. So gen'rous France inspires her social sons !
They have been ever dear and useful to me—
Would I were nearer to him— Noble Sir,

[Nerestan approaches.]

How have I merited, that you for me
Should pass such distant seas, to bring me blessings,
And hazard your own safety for my sake ?

Ner. My name, Sir, is Nerestan ; born in Syria,
I wore the chains of slavery from my birth ;
Till quitting the proud crescent for the court 200
Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye
I learnt the trade of arms :—the rank I held
Was but the kind distinction which he gave me,
To tempt my courage to deserve regard.
Your sight, unhappy prince, would charm his eye ;
That best and greatest monarch will behold
With grief and joy those venerable wounds,
And print embraces where your fetters bound you.
All Paris will revere the cross's martyr ;
“ Paris, the refuge still of ruin'd kings !”

Lus. Alas ! in times long past, I've seen its glory :

D ij

When Philip the victorious liv'd, I fought
 A-breast with Montmorency and Melun,
 D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy;—
 Names which were then the praise and dread of war!
 But what have I to do at Paris now?

I stand upon the brink of the cold grave;
 That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,
 The King of Kings, and ask the recompence
 For all my woes, long-suffer'd for his sake—
 You gen'rous witnesses of my last hour, 220
 While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,
 And join the resignation of my soul.

Nerestan! Chatillon!—and you, fair mourner!
 Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows!
 Pity a father, the unhappiest sure
 That ever felt the hand of angry heaven!
 My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;
 Half my long life they flow'd, and still will flow!
 A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,
 Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years—
 My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember—

Chat. Would I were able to forget your woe.

Lus. Thou wert a pris'ner with me in Cæsarea,
 And there beheld'st my wife and two dear sons
 Perish in flames.

Chat. A captive and in fetters,
 I could not help 'em.

Lus. I know thou could'st not—
 Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene! these eyes beheld it.—
 Husband and father, helpless I beheld it.—

Deny'd the mournful privilege to die !
Oh, my poor children ! whom I now deplore ;
If ye are saints in Heav'n, as sure ye are,
Look with an eye of pity on that brother,
That sister whom you left !—If I have yet,
Or son or daughter :—for in early chains,
Far from their lost an unassisting father,
I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,
To this seraglio ; hence to be dispers'd
In nameless remnants o'er the east, and spread
Our Christian miseries round a faithless world.

Chat. 'Twas true,—For in the horrors of that day,
I snatch'd your infant daughter from her cradle ;
“ But finding ev'ry hope of flight was vain,
“ Scarce had I sprinkled, from a public fountain,
“ Those sacred drops which wash the soul from sin,”
When from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
Forc'd the lost innocent, who smiling lay,
And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers !
With her, your youngest, then your only son, 260
Whose little life had reach'd the fourth sad year,
And just giv'n sense to feel his own misfortunes,
Was order'd to this city.

Ner. I, too, hither,
Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
Came in that crowd of undistinguish'd Christians.—

Lus. You !—came you thence ?—Alas ! who knows
but you
Might heretofore have seen my two poor children.

[*Looking up.*] Hah, Madam! that small ornament you wear,

Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
How long has it been yours?

Zar. From my first birth, Sir—

Ah, what! you seem surpriz'd!—why should this move you?

Lus. Would you confide it to my trembling hands?

Zar. To what new wonders am I now reserv'd?

Oh, Sir! what mean you?

Lus. Providence and Heaven!

Oh, failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope?

Can this be possible?—Yes, yes—'tis she!

This little cross—I know it, by sure marks! 280

Oh! take me, Heav'n! while I can die with joy—

Zar. Oh, do not, Sir, distract me!—rising thoughts,
And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me!

Lus. Tell me, yet,

Has it remain'd for ever in your hands?

What—both brought captives from Cæsarca hither?

Zar. Both, both—

“ Oh, heaven! have I then found a father? ”;

Lus. Their voice! their looks!

The living images of their dear mother!

O God! who see'st my tears, and know'st my thoughts
Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope —;

Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.

Madam! Nerestan!—Help me, Chatillon! [Rising.
Nerestan, hast thou on thy breast a scar,

Which ere Cæsarea fell, from a fierce hand,
Surprizing us by night, my child receiv'd?

Ner. Bless'd hand!—I bear it,—Sir, the mark is
there!

Lus. Merciful heaven!

Ner. [Kneeling.] Oh, Sir!—Oh, Zara, kneel.—

Zar. [Kneeling.] My father!—Oh!— 301

Lus. Oh, my lost children!

Both. Oh!

Lus. My son! my daughter! lost in embracing you,
I would now die, lest this should prove a dream.

Chat. How touch'd is my glad heart, to see their
joy!

Lus. They shall not tear you from my arms—my
children!

Again, I find you—dear in wretchedness:
Oh, my brave son—and thou, my nameless daughter!
Now dissipate all doubt, remove all dread,
Has Heaven, that gives me back my children—giv'n
'em,

Such as I lost 'em?—Come they Christians to me?
One weeps and one declines a conscious eye!
Your silence speaks—too well I understand it.

Zar. I cannot, Sir deceive you—Osman's laws
Were mine—and Osman is not Christian.—

Lus. Her words are thunder bursting on my head;
Wert not for thee, my son, I now should die;
Full sixty years I fought the Christian's cause,
Saw their doon'd temple fall, their pow'r destroy'd:
Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth, 321

Yet never for myself my tears sought Heaven ;
 All for my children rose my fruitless prayers :
 Yet, what avails a father's wretched joy ?
 I have a daughter gain'd, and Heav'n an enemy.
 Oh, my misguided daughter—lose not thy faith,
 Reclaim thy birthright—think upon the blood
 Of twenty Christian kings, that fills thy veins ;
 'Tis heroes' blood—the blood of saints and martyrs !
 What would thy mother feel, to see thee thus !
 She, and thy murder'd brothers !—think, they call
 thee ?

Think that thou seest 'em stretch their bloody arms,
 And weep to win thee from their murd'rer's bosom.
 Ev'n in the place where thou betray'st thy God,
 He dy'd, my child, to save thee.—“ Turn thy eyes,
 “ And see ; for thou art near his sacred sepulchre ;
 “ Thou canst not move a step, but where he trod !”
 Thou tremblest—Oh ! admit me to thy soul ;
 Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted father ; 339
 “ Take not thus soon, again, the life thou gav'st him : ”
 Shame not thy mother—nor renounce thy God.—
 'Tis past—Repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes ;
 I see bright truth descending to thy heart,
 And now, my long-lost child is found for ever.

“ *Ner.* Oh, doubly blest ! a sister, and a soul,
 “ To be redeem'd together ! ”

Zar. Oh, my father !

Dear author of my life ! inform me, teach me,
 What should my duty do ?

Lus. By one short word,

To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
Say thou art a Christian——

Zar. Sir—I am a Christian.

Lus. Receive her, gracious Heaven! and bless her
for it.

Enter ORASMIN.

Oras. Madam, the Sultan order'd me to tell you,
That he expects you instant quit this place,
And bid your last farewell to these vile Christians.
You, captive Frenchmen, follow me; for you,
It is my task to answer.——

Chat. Still new miseries! 360
How cautious man should be, to say, I'm happy!

Lus. These are the times, my friends, to try our
firmness,
Our Christian firmness.——

Zar. Alas, sir! Oh!

Lus. Oh, you!—I dare not name you!
Farewell—but, come what may, be sure remember
You keep the fatal secret! for the rest,
Leave all to Heaven——be faithful, and be blest.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osman.

ORASMIN, this alarm was false and groundless;
Lewis no longer turns his arms on me;

The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
 Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
 And famish on Arabia's desart sands.
 Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas :
 And Lewis, hovering o'er the coast of Cyprus,
 Alarms the fears of Asia—But I've learnt,
 That steering wide from our unmenac'd ports,
 He points his thunder at th' Egyptian shore.
 There let him war, and waste my enemies ;
 Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.—
 Release those Christians—I restore their freedom ;
 'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me :
 Transport 'em at my cost, to find their king ;
 I wish to have him know me : carry thither
 This Lusignan, whom, tell him, I restore,
 Because I cannot fear his fame in arms ;
 But love him for his virtue and his blood.
 Tell him, my father, having conquer'd twice, 20
 Condemn'd him to perpetual chains ; but I
 Have set him free, that I might triumph more.
Oras. The Christians gain an army in his name.
Osm. I cannot fear a sound.—
Oras. But, sir—should Lewis—
Osm. Tell Lewis and the world—it shall be so :
 Zara propos'd it, and my heart approves :
 Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love !
 “ Why wilt thou force me to confess it all ?
 “ Tho' I to Lewis send back Lusignan,
 “ I give him but to Zara—I have griev'd her ;
 “ And ow'd her the atonement of this joy.

" Thy false advices, which but now misled
 " My anger, to confine those helpless Christians,
 " Gave her a pain ; I feel for her and me :"
 But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.
 For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials ;
 " But, 'tis not lost, that hour ! 'twill be all hers!"
 She would employ it in a conference
 With that Nerestan, whom thou know'st——that
 Christian !

Oras. And have you, sir, indulged that strange desire ?

Osm. What mean'st thou ? They were infant slaves together ;

Friends should part kind, who are to meet no more.
 When Zara asks, I will refuse her nothing :
 Restraint was never made for those we love.
 Down with those rigours of the proud seraglio ;
 I hate its laws—where blind austerity
 Sinks virtue to necessity.—My blood
 Disclaims your Asian jealousy ;—I hold
 The fierce, free plainness of my Scythian ancestors,
 Their open confidence, their honest hate,
 Their love unfearing, and their anger told.
 Go—the good Christian waits—conduct him to her ;
 Zara expects thee—What she wills, obey.

[*Exit Osman.*

Oras. Ho ! Christian ! enter——wait a moment here.

Enter NERESTAN.

Zara will soon approach—I go to find her.

[*Exit Oras.*

Ner. In what a state, in what a place, I leave her ?
Oh, faith ! Oh, father ! Oh, my poor lost sister !
She's here—

Enter ZARA.

Thank Heaven, it is not, then, unlawful 60
To see you, yet once more, my lovely sister !
Not all so happy !—We, who met but now,
Shall never meet again—for Lusignan—
We shall be orphans still, and want a father.

Zar. Forbid it Heaven !

Ner. His last sad hour's at hand—
That flow of joy, which follow'd our discovery,
Too strong and sudden for his age's weakness,
Wasting his spirits, dry'd the source of life,
And nature yields him up to time's demand.
Shall he not die in peace ?—Oh ! let no doubt
Disturb his parting moments with distrust ;
Let me, when I return to close his eyes,
Compose his mind's impatience too, and tell him,
You are confirm'd a Christian !—

Zar. Oh ! may his soul enjoy, in earth and heaven,
Eternal rest ! nor let one thought, one sigh,
One bold complaint of mine recall his cares !
But you have injur'd me, who still can doubt.—
What ! am I not your sister ? and shall you 80
Refuse me credit ? You suppose me light ;
You, who should judge my honour by your own,
Shall you distrust a truth I dar'd avow,
And stamp apostate on a sister's heart !

Ner. Ah! do not misconceive me!—if I err'd,
Affection, not distrust, misled my fear;
Your will may be a Christian, yet, not you;
There is a sacred mark—a sign of faith,
A pledge of promise, that must firm your claim;
Wash you from guilt, and open Heaven before you.
Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
By all the martyr'd saints, who call you daughter,
That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
By that mysterious rite which waits your call.

Zar. I swear by Heaven, and all its holy host,
Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
And the dread presence of its living author,
To have no faith but yours;—to die a Christian!
Now, tell me what this mystic faith requires.

Ner. To hate the happiness of Osman's throne,
And love that God, who, thro' his maze of woes,
Has brought us all, unhoping, thus together.
For me—I am a soldier, uninstructed,
Nor daring to instruct, tho' strong in faith:
But I will bring th' ambassador of Heaven,
To clear your views, and lift you to your God!
Be it your task to gain admission for him.—
But where? from whom?—Oh! thou immortal Power!
Whence can we hope it, in this curs'd seraglio?
Who is this slave of Osman? Yes, this slave!
Does she not boast the blood of twenty kings?
Is not her race the same with that of Lewis?
Is she not Lusignan's unhappy daughter?
A Christian, and my sister?—yet a slave!

A willing slave!—I dare not speak more plainly.

Zar. Cruel I go on—Alas! you do not know me!
At once, a stranger to my secret fate,
My pains, my fears, my wishes, and my power:
I am—I will be Christian—will receive
This holy priest, with his mysterious blessing;
I will not do nor suffer aught unworthy
Myself, my father, or my father's race.—
But, tell me—nor be tender on this point,—
What punishment your Christian laws decree,
For an unhappy wretch, who, to herself
Unknown, and all abandon'd by the world,
Lost and enslav'd, has, in her sov'reign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touch'd his heart, and giv'n him all her own?

Ner. The punishment of such a slave should be
Death in this world—and pain in that to come.

Zar. I am that slave—strike here—and save my
shame.

Ner. Destruction to my hopes!—Can it be you?

Zar. It is—Ador'd by Osman, I adore him:
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.

Ner. What! marry Osman!—Let the world grow
dark,
That the extinguish'd sun may hide thy shame!
Could it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee.

Zar. Strike, strike—I love him—yes, by Heav'n, I
love him.

Ner. Death is thy due—but not thy due from me:
Yet, were the honour of our house no bar——

My father's fame, and the too gentle laws
Of that religion which thou hast disgrac'd—
Did not the God thou quitt'st hold back my arm—
Not there—I could not there—but, by my soul,
I would rush, desp'rate, to the Sultan's breast,
And plunge my sword in his proud heart who damns
thee.

Oh! shame! shame! shame! at such a time as this!
When Lewis! that awak'ner of the world,
Beneath the lifted cross makes Egypt pale,
And draws the sword of Heaven to spread our faith!
Now to submit to see my sister doom'd
A bosom slave to him whose tyrant heart
But measures glory by the Christian's woe.
Yes—I will dare acquaint our father with it;
Departing Lusignan may live so long,
As just to hear thy shame, and die to 'scape it.

Zar. Stay—my too angry brother—stay—perhaps,
Zara has resolution great as thine:
'Tis cruel—and unkind!—Thy words are crimes;
My weakness but misfortune! Dost thou suffer;
I suffer more;—Oh! would to Heaven this blood
Of twenty boasted kings would stop at once,
And stagnate in my heart!—It then no more
Would rush in boiling fevers thro' my veins,
And ev'ry trembling drop be fill'd with Osman.
How has he lov'd me! how has he oblig'd me!
I owe thee to him! What has he not done,
To justify his boundless pow'r of charming?
For me, he softens the severe decrees

Of his own faith ;— and is it just that mine
 Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me ?
 No——I will be a Christian——but preserve
 My gratitude as sacred as my faith ;
 If I have death to fear for Osman's sake,
 It must be from his coldness, not his love.

Ner. I must at once condemn and pity thee ;
 “ I cannot point thee out which way to go,
 “ But Providence will lend its light to guide thee.
 “ That sacred rite, which thou shalt now receive,
 “ Will strengthen and support thy feeble heart,
 “ To live an innocent, or die a martyr : ”
 Here, then, begin performance of thy vow ;
 Here, in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
 Promise thy king, thy father, and thy God,
 Not to accomplish these detested nuptials,
 Till first the rev'rend priest has clear'd your eyes,
 Taught you to know, and giv'n you claim to Heav'n.
 Promise me this——

Zar. So, bless me, Heav'n ! I do.—
 Go—hasten the good priest, I will expect him ;
 But first return—cheer my expiring father,
 Tell him I am, and will be all he wishes me :
 Tell him, to give him life 'twere joy to die.

Ner. I go—Farewel—farewel, unhappy sister !

[*Exit Nerestan.*]

Zar. I am alone—and now be just, my heart !
 And tell me, wilt thou dare betray thy God ?
 What am I ? What am I about to be ?
 Daughter of Lusignan—or wife to Osman ?

Am I a lover most, or most a Christian ?
“ Wou’d Selima were come ! and yet ’tis just,
“ All friends should fly her who forsakes herself.”
What shall I do ?—What heart has strength to bear
These double weights of duty ?—Help me, Heav’n !
To thy hard laws I render up my soul :
But, Oh ! demand it back—for now ’tis Osman’s.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara !
Impatient eyes attend—the rites expect thee ;
And my devoted heart no longer brooks
This distance from its soft’ner !—“ all the lamps
“ Of nuptial love are lighted, and burn pure,
“ As if they drew their brightness from thy blushes :
“ The holy mosque is fill’d with fragrant fumes,
“ Which emulate the sweetness of thy breathing :
“ My prostrate people all confirm my choice,
“ And send their souls to heaven in prayers for bless-
 ings.
“ Thy envious rivals, conscious of thy right,
“ Approve superior charms, and join to praise thee ;
“ The throne that waits thee, seems to shine more
 richly,
“ As all its gems, with animated lustre,
“ Fear’d to look dim beneath the eyes of Zara !”
Come, my slow love ! the ceremonies wait thee ;
Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.
Zar. Oh, what a wretch am I ! Oh, grief ! Oh,
 love !

" Osm. Come——come——

" Zar. Where shall I hide my blushes ?

" Osm. Blushes——here, in my bosom, hide 'em.

" Zar. My lord!"

Osm. Nay, Zara—give me thy hand, and come——

Zar. Instruct me, Heaven !

What I should say—Alas ! I cannot speak.

Osm. Away——this modest, sweet reluctant trifling
But doubles my desires, and thy own beauties.

Zar. Ah, me!

Osm. Nay—but thou should'st not be too cruel.

Zar. I can no longer bear it—Oh, my lord—

Osm. Ha!—" What ?—whence ?—how ?"—

Zar. My lord ! my sov'reign !

Heav'n knows this marriage would have been a bliss

Above my humble hopes !—yet, witness love !

Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,
But from the pride of calling Osman mine.

" Would you had been no emperor ! and I

" Possess'd of power and charms deserving you !

" That, slighting Asia's thrones, I might alone

" Haye left a proffer'd world, to follow you

" Through deserts, uninhabited by men,

" And bless'd with ample room for peace and love :"

But, as it is——these Christians——

Osm. Christians ! What !

How start two images into thy thoughts,

So distant——as the Christians and my love !

Zar. That good old Christian, rev'rend Lusignan,
Now dying, ends his life and woes together.

Osm. Well! let him die—What has thy heart to feel,
Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death
Of an old wretched Christian?—Thank our pro-
phet,

Thou art no Christian!—Educated here,
Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:
Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mis-tim'd.
What! tho' an aged suff'rer dies unhappy,
Why should his foreign fate disturb our joys?

Zar. Sir, if you love me, and would have me think
That I am truly dear—

Osm. Heaven! if I love!

Zar. Permit me—

Osm. What?

Zar. To desire—

Osm. Speak out.

Zar. The nuptial rites
May be deferr'd till—

Osm. What!—Is that the voice
Of Zara?

Zar. Oh, I cannot bear his frown!

Osm. Of Zara!

Zar. It is dreadful to my heart,
To give you but a seeming cause for anger;
Pardon my grief—Alas! I cannot bear it;
There is a painful terror in your eye
That pierces to my soul—hid from your sight
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.

[Exit disordered.]

Osm. I stand immoveable, like senseless marble ;
 Horror had frozen my suspended tongue ;
 And an astonish'd silence robb'd my will
 Of power to tell her that she shock'd my soul !
 Spoke she to me ?—Sure I misunderstood her !
 Cou'd it be me she left ?—What have I seen !

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, what a change is here !—She's gone,
 And I permitted it, I know not how.

Oras. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault
 Of innocence, too modest oft in love.

Osm. But why, and whence those tears ?—those
 Looks ! that flight !

That grief, so strongly stamp'd on every feature ?
 If it has been that Frenchman !—What a thought !
 How low, how horrid a suspicion that !

“ The dreadful flash at once gives light and kills me ;
 “ My too bold confidence repell'd my caution—

“ An infidel ! a slave !—a heart like mine

“ Reduc'd to suffer from so vile a rival !”

But tell me, did'st thou mark 'em at their parting ?

Did'st thou observe the language of their eyes ?

Hide nothing from me——Is my love betray'd ?

Tell me my whole disgrace : nay, if thou tremblest,
 I hear thy pity speak; though thou art silent.

Oras. I tremble at the pangs I see you suffer.
 Let not your angry apprehension urge
 Your faithful slave to irritate your anguish ;
 I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears ;

But they were tears of charity and grief :
I cannot think there was a cause deserving
This agony of passion——

Osm. Why no——I thank thee——
Orasmin, thou art wise ! It cou'd not be
That I should stand expos'd to such an insult.
Thou know'st, had Zara meant me the offence,
She wants not wisdom to have hid it better :
How rightly didst thou judge !—Zara shall know it,
And thank thy honest service——After all,
Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her ?
What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave,
Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
Nay, who resolves to see these climes no more.

Oras. Why did you, Sir, against our country's
custom,
Indulge him with a second leave to come ?
He said, he should return once more to see her.

Osm. Return ! the traitor ! he return !—Dares he
Presume to press a second interview ?
Would he be seen again ?——He shall be seen ;
But dead.—I'll punish the audacious slave,
To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.
Be still, my transports ; violence is blind :
I know my heart at once is fierce and weak ;
“ I feel that I descend below myself ;
“ Zara can never justly be suspected ;
“ Her sweetness was not formed to cover treason :
“ Yet, Osman must not stoop to woman's follies ;

“ Their tears, complaints, regrets, and reconcilements,

“ With all their light, capricious roll of changes,

“ Are arts too vulgar to be tried on me.

“ It would become me better to resume

“ The empire of my will.” Rather than fall
Beneath myself, I must, how dear soe'er

It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara!—

Away—but mark me—these seraglio doors,
Against all Christians be they henceforth shut,

Close as the dark retreats of silent death.

[*Exit Orasmin.*

What have I done, just Heav'n ! thy rage to move,
That thou shouldst sink me down, so low to love ?

[*Exit.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ZARA, SELIMA.

Selima.

AH, Madam ! how at once I grieve your fate,
And how admire your virtue!—Heaven permits,
And Heaven will give you strength, to bear misfor-
tune ;

To break these chains, so strong and yet so dear.

Zar. Oh, that I could support the fatal struggle !

Sel. Th' Eternal aids your weakness, sees your will,
Directs your purpose, and rewards your sorrows.

Zar. Never had wretch more cause to hope he does.

Sel. What ! tho' you here no more behold your father ?

There is a Father to be found above,
Who can restore that father to his daughter.

Zar. But I have planted pain in Osman's bosom ;
He loves me , even to death ! and I reward him
With anguish and despair.—How base ! how cruel !
But I deserv'd him not ; I should have been
Too happy, and the hand of Heav'n repell'd me.

Sel. What ! will you then regret the glorious loss,
And hazard thus a viët'ry bravely won ?

Zar. Inhuman viët'ry !——thou dost not know
This love so pow'rful, this sole joy of life, 20
This first, best hope of earthly happiness,
Is yet less pow'rful in my heart than Heaven !
To him who made that heart I offer it ;
There, there, I sacrifice my bleeding passion ;
I pour before him ev'ry guilty tear ;
I beg him to efface the fond impression,
And fill with his own image all my soul :
But, while I weep and sigh, repent and pray,
Remembrance brings the object of my love,
And ev'ry light illusion floats before him.
I see, I hear him, and again lie charms !
Fills my glad soul, and shines 'twixt me and Heav'n !
Oh, all ye royal ancestors ! Oh, father !
Mother ! You Christians, and the Christians' God !
You who deprive me of this gen'rous lover !
If you permit me not to live for him,

Let me not live at all, and I am bless'd:
 " Let me die innocent ; let his dear hand
 " Close the sad eyes of her he stoop'd to love,
 " And I acquit my fate, and ask no more. 40
 " But he forgives me not——regardless now,
 " Whether, or how I live, or when I die.
 " He quits me, scorns me——and I yet live on,
 " And talk of death as distant."——

Sel. Ah ! despair not ;

Trust your eternal helper, and be happy.

Zar. Why——what has Osman done, that he too
 should not ?

Has Heaven so nobly form'd his heart to hate it ?
 Gen'rous and just, beneficent and brave,
 Where he but Christian——What can man be more ?
 I wish, methinks, this rev'rend priest was come
 To free me from these doubts, which shake my soul :
 Yet know not why I should not dare to hope,
 That Heav'n, whose mercy all confess and feel,
 Will pardon and approve th' alliance wish'd :
 Perhaps it seats me on the throne of Syria,
 To tax my pow'r for these good Christians' comfort.
 Thou know'st the mighty Saladine, who first
 Conquer'd this empire from my father's race,
 Who, like my Osman charm'd th' admiring world,
 Drew breath, tho' Syrian, from a Christian mother.

Sel. What mean you, madam ! Ah ! you do not see—

Zar. Yes, yes—I see it all ; I am not blind :
 I see my country and my race condemn me ;
 I see, that spite of all, I still love Osman.

What if I now go throw me at his feet,
And tell him there sincerely what I am?

Sel. Consider—that might cost your brother's life,
Expose the Christians, and betray you all.

Zar. You do not know the noble heart of Osman.

Sel. I know him the protector of a faith,
Sworn enemy to ours;—The more he loves,
The less will he permit you to profess
Opinions which he hates: to-night the priest,
In private introduc'd, attends you here;
You promis'd him admission——

Zar. Would I had not!

I promis'd, too, to keep this fatal secret;
My father's urg'd command requir'd it of me;
I must obey, all dangerous as it is; 80
Compell'd to silence, Osman is enrag'd,
Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Madam! there was a time when my charm'd
heart
Made it a virtue to be lost in love;
When, without blushing, I indulg'd my flame,
And every day still made you dearer to me.
You taught me, madam, to believe my love
Rewarded and return'd—nor was that hope,
Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors
Who choose to sigh devoted at the feet
Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,
Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:
But 'twere prophane to think of power in love.

Dear as my passion makes you, I deline
 Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
 You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
 By coarse reproaches, giving pain to you,
 And shaming my own greatness—wounded deeply,
 Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
 I come——to tell you——

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Zar. Give my trembling heart
 A moment's respite——

Osm. “ That unwilling coldness
 “ Is the just prize of your capricious lightness ;
 “ Your ready arts may spare the fruitless pains
 “ Of colouring deceit with fair pretences ;
 “ I would not wish to hear your slight excuses ;
 “ I cherish ignorance, to save my blushes.”
 Osman in every trial shall remember
 That he is emperor.——Whate'er I suffer,
 'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
 And to my injur'd bosom take despair,
 Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
 Convinc'd those sighs were never meant for me—
 Go, madam—you are free—from Osman's pow'r—
 Expect no wrongs, but see his face no more.

Zar. At last, 'tis come—the fear'd, the murd'ring
 moment

Is come——and I am curs'd by earth and heaven !

[*Throws herself on the ground.*

If it is true that I am lov'd no more——
 If you——

Osm. It is too true, my fame requires it ;
 It is too true, that I unwilling leave you ;

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That I at once renounce you and adore—
Zara!—you weep!

Zar. If I am doom'd to loose you,
If I must wander o'er an empty world,
Unloving and unlov'd—Oh! yet, do justice
To the afflicted——do not wrong me doubly:
Punish me, if 'tis needful to your peace,
But say not, I deserv'd it—“ This, at least,
“ Believe——for not the greatness of your soul
“ Is truth more pure and sacred——no regret
“ Can touch my bleeding heart, for I have lost
“ The rank of her you raise to share your throne.
“ I know I never ought to have been there;
“ My fate and my defects require I lose you.”
But ah! my heart was never known to Osman.
May Heav'n that punishes for ever hate me,
If I regret the loss of aught but you.

Osm. Rise—“ rise, this means not love?” 140

“ Zar. Strike——Strike me, Heaven!”

Osm. What! is it love to force yourself to wound
The heart you wish to gladden? But I find
Lovers least know themselves; for I believ'd,
That I had taken back the power I gave you;
Yet see!—you did but weep, and have resum'd me!
Proud as I am——I must confess, one wish
Evades my power——the blessing to forget you.
Zara—thy tears were form'd to teach disdain,
That softness can disarm it.—'Tis decreed.
I must for ever love—but from what cause,
If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,

Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me?
 Speak! "Is it levity——or, is it fear?
 " Fear of a power that, but for blessing thee,
 " Had, without joy, been painful."—Is it artifice?
 Oh! spare the needless pains—Art was not made
 For Zara.—Art, however innocent,
 Looks like deceiving—I abhor'd it ever.

Zar. Alas! I have no art; not even enough 160
 To hide this love, and this distress you give me.

Osm. New riddles! Speak with plainness to my soul;
 What canst thou mean?

Zar. I have no power to speak it.

Osm. Is it some secret dangerous to my state?
 Is it some Christian plot grown ripe against me?

Zar. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you!
 Osman is bless'd beyond the reach of fear:
 Fears and misfortunes threaten only Zara.

Osm. Why threaten Zara?

Zar. Permit me, at your feet,
 Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.

Osm. A favour! Oh, you guide the will of Osman.

Zar. Ah! would to Heav'n our duties were united,
 " Firm as our thoughts and wishes!" But this day;
 But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
 Alone, and far-divided from your eye,
 To cover my distress, lest you, too tender,
 Should see and share it with me—from to-morrow,
 I will not have a thought conceal'd from you. 180

"*Osm.* What strange disquiet, from what stranger
 cause!

"*Zar.* If I am really bless'd with Osman's love,

" He will not then refuse this humble prayer."

Osm. If it must be, it must.—Be pleas'd, my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent
Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go——but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.

Zar. It gives me more than pain to make you feel it.

Osm. And——can you, Zara, leave me?

Zar. Alas! my lord! [Exit Zara.]

Osm. [Alone.] It should be yet, methinks, too soon
to fly me!

Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith.
The more I think, the less I can conceive,
What hidden cause should raise such strange despair!
Now, when her hopes have wings, and every wish
Is courted to be lively!—When I love,
And joy and empire press her to their bosom;
" When not alone belov'd, but ev'n a lover: 199
" Professing and accepting; bless'd and blessing;
" To see her eyes, through tears, shine mystic love!
" 'Tis madness! and I were unworthy power,
" To suffer longer the capricious insult!"
Yet, was I blameless?—No—I was too rash;
I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her;
I have distrusted her—and still she loves:
Gen'rous atonement that! " and 'tis my duty
" To expiate, by a length of soft indulgence,
" The transports of a rage, which still was love.
" Henceforth, I never will suspect her false;
" Nature's plain power of charming dwells about her,

“ And innocence gives force to ev’ry word.
 “ I owe full confidence to all she looks,
 “ For in her eye shines truth, and ev’ry beam
 “ Shoots confirmation round her.”—I remark’d,
 Ev’n while she wept, her soul a thousand times
 Sprung to her lips, and long’d to leap to mine,
 With honest, ardent utt’rance of her love.—
 Who can possess a heart so low, so base,
 To look such tenderness, and yet have none ? 220

Enter MELIDOR with ORASMIN.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world !
 Address’d to Zara, and in private brought,
 Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,
 And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.

Osm. Come nearer, give it me.—To Zara!—Rise.
 Bring it with speed——Shame on your flattering
 distance——

[*Advancing, and snatching the letter.*
 Be honest—and approach me like a subject
 Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.

Mel. One of the Christian slaves, whom late your
 bounty
 Releas’d from bondage, sought with heedful guile,
 Unnotic’d to deliver it.——Discover’d
 He waits, in chains, his doom from your decree.

Osm. Leave me ! I tremble, as if something fatal
 Were meant me from this letter——should I read it?

Oras. Who knows but it contains some happy truth
 That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart ?

Osm. Be it as 'twill—it shall be read—“ my hands
 “ Have apprehension that out-reaches mine !
 “ Why should they tremble thus ? ”—’tis done—
 and now, [Opens the letter.]

Fate, be thy call obey’d—Orasmin, mark— 240

‘ There is a secret passage tow’rd the mosque ;
 ‘ That way you might escape ; and unperceiv’d,
 ‘ Fly your observers, and fulfil our hope ;
 ‘ Despise the danger, and depend on me,
 ‘ Who wait you, but to die if you deceive.’ ”

Hell ! tortures ! death ! and woman ! — What, Orasmin !
 Are we awake ? Heardst thou ? Can this be Zara ?

Oras. Would I had lost all sense—for what I heard
 Has cover’d my afflicted heart with horror.

Osm. Thou seest how I am treated !

Oras. Monstrous treason !
 To an affront like this you cannot——must not
 Remain insensible——You, who but now,
 From the most slight suspicion, felt such pain,
 Must, in the horror of so black a guilt,
 Find an effectual cure, and banish love.

Osm. Seek her this instant—go, Orasmin, fly—
 Shew her this letter—bid her read and tremble :
 Then, in the rising horrors of her guilt,
 Stab her unfaithful breast, and let her die. 260
 Say, while thou strik’st——Stay, stay, return and
 pity me ;

“ I will think first a moment—Let that Christian

" Be strait confronted with her—Stay—I will,
 " I will—I know not what!"——Would I were
 dead!

Would I had dy'd, unconscious of this shame!

Oras. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong,

Osm. See here detected this infernal secret!

This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart
 Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain!

Why! what a reach has woman to deceive!

Under how fine a veil of grief and fear

Did she propose retirement 'till to-morrow!

And I, blind dotard! gave the fool's consent,

Sooth'd her, and suffer'd her to go! — She parted,
 Dissolv'd in tears; and parted to betray me!

" *Oras.* Reflection serves but to confirm her guilt.

" At length resume yourself; awaken thought;

" Assert your greatness; and resolve like Osman.

" *Osm.* Nerestan, too—Was this the boasted honour

" Of that proud Christian, whom Jerusalem 280

" Grew loud in praising! whose half-envy'd virtue

" I wonder'd at myself; and felt disdain

" To be but equal to a Christian's greatness!

" And does he thank me thus; base infidel!

" Honest, pretending, pious, praying villain?

" Yet Zara is a thousand times more base,

" More hypocrite, than he? A slave! a wretch!

" So low, so lost, that even the vilest labours,

" In which he lay condemn'd, could never sink him

" Beneath his native infamy——Did she not know

" What I have done, what suffer'd—for her sake?"

Oras. Could you, my gracious lord ! forgive my
zeal,

You would—

Osm. I know it—thou art right—I'll see her—
I'll tax her in thy presence ;—I'll upbraid her—
I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.

“ *Oras.* Alas, my lord ! disorder'd as you are,

“ What can you wish to say ?

“ *Osm.* I know not, now—

“ But I resolve to see her—lest she think 300

“ Her falsehood has, perhaps, the power to grieve
me.

Oras. Believe me, sir, your threat'nings, your
complaints,

What will they all produce, but Zara's tears
To quench this fancy'd anger ! Your lost heart,
Seduc'd against itself, will search but reasons
To justify the guilt, which gives it pain :
Rather conceal from Zara this discovery ;
And let some trusty slave convey the letter,
Reclos'd to her own hand—then shall you learn,
Spite of her frauds, disguise, and artifice,
The firmness, or abasement of her soul.

Osm. Thy counsel charms me ! We'll about it now.

“ 'Twill be some recompence, at least, to see

“ Her blushes when detected.—

“ *Oras.* Oh, my lord !

“ I doubt you in the trial——for your heart.—

“ *Osm.* Distrust me not—my love, indeed, is weak,

“ But honour and disdain more strong than Zara.”

Here, take this fatal letter—chuse a slave
Whom yet she never saw, and who retains
His tried fidelity—Dispatch—begone—

320

[Exit Orasmin.]

Now, whither shall I turn my eyes and steps,
The surest way to shun her : and give time
For this discovering trial?—Heav'n! she's here !

Enter ZARA.

So, Madam! fortune will befriend my cause,
And free me from your fetters.—You are met
Most aptly, to dispel a new-ris'n doubt,
That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.
Unhappy each by other, it is time
To end our mutual pain, that both may rest :
You want not generosity, but love ;
My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,
My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,
Touching your gratitude, provok'd regard ;
'Till, by a length of benefits besieg'd,
Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love :
But you deceiv'd yourself and injur'd me.
There is, I'm told, an object more deserving
Your love than Osman—I would know his name :
Be just, nor trifle with my anger : tell me
Now, while expiring pity struggles faint ;
While I have yet, perhaps, the pow'r to pardon :
Give up the bold invader of my claim,
And let him die to save thee. Thou art known ;
Think and resolve—While I yet speak, renounce him;

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While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it ;
Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul,
That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.

Zar. Can it be Osman speaks, and speaks to Zara ?
Learn, cruel ? learn, that this afflicted heart,
This heart which Heav'n delights to prove by tor-
tures,

Did it not love, has pride and power to shun you.

“ Alas ! you will not know me ! What have I

“ To fear, but that unhappy love you question ?

“ That love which only could outweigh the shame

“ I feel, while I descend to weep my wrongs.”

I know not whether Heav'n, that frowns upon me,
Has destin'd my unhappy days for yours ;

But, be my fate or bless'd or curs'd, I swear

By honour, dearer ev'n than life or love, 360

Could Zara be but mistress of herself,

She would, with cold regard, look down on kings,

And, you alone excepted, fly 'em all.

“ Would you learn more, and open all my heart ?

“ Know then, that, spite of this renew'd injustice,

“ I do not—cannot wish to love you less :

“ That, long before you look'd so low as Zara

“ She gave her heart to Osman ; yours, before

“ Your benefits had bought her, or your eye

“ Had thrown distinction round her ; never had,

“ Nor ever will acknowledge other lover :”—

And to this sacred truth, attesting Heaven,

I call thy dreadful notice ! If my heart

Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from Osman.

Osm. " What ! does she yet presume to swear sincerity ! "

Oh, boldness of unblushing perjury !
Had I not seen ; had I not read such proof
Of her light falsehood as extinguish'd doubt,
I could not be a man, and not believe her.

Zar. Alas, my lord ! what cruel fears have seiz'd
you ? 380

What harsh, mysterious words were those I heard ?

Osm. What fears should Osman feel, since Zara
loves him ?

Zar. I cannot live and answer to your voice
In that reproachful tone ; your angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.

Osm. Since Zara loves him !

Zar. Is it possible
Osman should disbelieve it ?—Again, again
Your late-repent'd violence returns—
Alas ! what killing frown's you dart against me !
Can it be kind ? Can it be just to doubt me ?

Osm. No ! I can doubt no longer—You may retire.

[Exit Zara.]

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscover'd power of seeming ;
" She's at the topmost point of shameless artifice ;
" An empress at deceiving ! Soft and easy,
" Destroying like a plague, in calm tranquility :
" She's innocent she swears—so is the fire ;

“ It shines in harmless distance, bright and pleasing,
 “ Consuming nothing till it first embraces.” 400
 Say; hast thou chosen a slave?—Is he instructed?
 Haste to detect her vileness and my wrongs.

Oras. Punctual I have obey'd your whole command:

But have you arm'd, my lord, your injur'd heart,
 With coldness and indifference! Can you hear,
 All painless and unmov'd the false one's shame?

Osm. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

Oras. My lord! my emperor! forbid it, Heaven!

Osm. I have discern'd a gleam of distant hope;
 “ This hateful Christian, the light growth of France,
 “ Proud, young, vain, amorous, conceited, rash,
 “ Has misconceiv'd some charitable glance,
 “ And judg'd it love in Zara: he alone,
 “ Then, has offended me. Is it her fault,
 “ If those she charms are indiscreet and daring?
 “ Zara, perhaps, expected not this letter;
 “ And I, with rashness groundless as its writer's,
 “ Took fire at my own fancy, and have wrong'd her.”

Now hear me with attention—Soon as night
 Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;
 When this Nerestan, this ungrateful Christian, 421
 Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
 Be watchful that our guards surprize and seize him;
 Then, bound in fetters and o'erwhelm'd with shame,
 Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:—
 But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
 Mindful to what supreme excess I love. [Exit Oras.

On this last trial all my hopes depend ;
 Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
 Dispel the doubts that rack my anxious breast,
 If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's blest. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

ZARA and SELIMA.

Zara.

SOOTH me no longer, with this vain desire ;
 To a recluse like me, who dares henceforth
 Presume admission ! — the seraglio's shut —
 Barr'd and impassable — as death to time !
 My brother ne'er must hope to see me more : —
 How now ! what unknown slave accosts us here ?

Enter MELIDOR.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
 In secret witness I am wholly yours.

[*Zara reads the letter.*

Sel. [*Aside.*] Thou everlasting ruler of the world !
 Shed thy wish'd mercy on our hopeless tears ;
 Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
 And save my princess from the breast of Osman.

Zar. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your counsel.

Sel. Retire — you shall be call'd — wait near — Go,
 leave us. [Exit Mel.]

Zar. Read this, and tell me what I ought to answer :
 For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.

Sel. Say rather you would hear the voice of Heav'n.
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your God.

Zar. I know it, nor resist his awful will ;
Thou knowst that I have bound my soul by oath ; 20
But can I—ought I—to engage myself,
My brother, and the Christians, in this danger ?

Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears ;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul ;
“ I know your heart of strength to hazard all,
“ But it has let in traitors, who surrender
“ On poor pretence of safety :—Learn at least,
“ To understand the weakness that deceives you :
“ You tremble to offend your haughty lover,
“ Whom wrongs and outrage but endear the more ;
“ Yes—you are blind to Osman's cruel nature,
“ That Tartar's fierceness, that obscures his boun-
ties;”

This tyger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness ;
Yet, cannot your neglected heart efface
His fated, fix'd impression !

Zar. What reproach
Can I with justice make him ? — I, indeed,
Have given him cause to hate me ! — 40
Was not his throne, was not his temple ready ?
Did he not court his slave to be a queen,
And have not I declin'd it ? — I who ought
To tremble, conscious of affronted power !
Have not I triumph'd o'er his pride and love ?
Seen him submit his own high will to mine,

And sacrifice his wishes to my weakness ?

Sel. Talk we no more of this unhappy passion :
What resolution will your virtue take ?

Zar. All things combine to sink me to despair :
From the seraglio death alone will free me.
I long to see the Christians' happy climes ;
Yet in the moment, while I form that prayer,
I sigh a secret wish to languish here.

How sad a state is mine ! my restless soul
All ign'rant what to do, or what to wish ?
My only perfect sense is that of pain.

Oh, guardian Heav'n ! prote&t my brother's life,
For I will meet him, and fulfil his prayer :
Then, when from Solyma's unfriendly walls,
His absence shall unbind his sister's tongue,
Osman shall learn the secret of my birth,
My faith unshaken, and my deathless love ;
He will approve my choice, and pity me.
I'll send my brother word he may expect me.
Call in the faithful slave—God of my fathers !

60

[*Exit Selima.*

Let thy hand save me, and thy will dire&t.

Enter SELIMA and MELIDOR.

Go——tell the Christian who intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger ;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expe&t, and introduce him to his wish.

Away——the Sultan comes ; he must not find us.

[*Exeunt Zara and Selima.*

Enter OSMAN and ORASMIN.

Osm. Swifter, ye hours, move on ; my fury glows
Impatient, and would push the wheels of time.
How now ! What message dost thou bring ? Speak
boldly—

What answer gave she to the letter sent her ?

Mel. She blush'd and trembl'd, and grew pale, and
paus'd.

Then blush'd, and read it ; and again grew pale ;
And wept, and smil'd, and doubted, and resolv'd :
For after all this race of varied passions,
When she had sent me out, and call'd me back, 80
Tell him (she cry'd) who has intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger ;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish.

Osm. Enough—begone—I have no ear for more.—

[*To the slave.*

Leave me, thou too, Orasmin.—Leave me, life,

[*To Orasmin*

For ev'ry mortal aspect moves my hate :
Leave me to my distraction—“ I grow mad,
“ And cannot bear the visage of a friend.
“ Leave me to rage, despair, and shame, and wrongs ;
“ Leave me to seek myself—and shun mankind.”

[*Exit Orasmin.*

Who am I ?—Heav'n ! Who am I ? What resolve I ?
Zara ! Nerestan ! sound these words like names
Decreed to join ?—Why pause I ?—Perish Zara—

Would I could tear her image from my heart :—
 “ ‘Twere happier not to live at all, than live
 “ Her scorn, the sport of an ungrateful false one!
 “ And sink the sov’reign in a woman’s property.”

Re-enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin !—Friend ! return, I cannot bear
 This absence from thy reason : ’twas unkind, 100
 ’Twas cruel to obey me, thus distress’d,
 And wanting pow’r to think, when I had lost thee.
 How goes the hour ? Has he appear’d, this rival ?
 Perish the shameful sound—This villain Christian !
 Has he appear’d below ?

Oras. Silent and dark,
 Th’ unbreathing world is hush’d, as if it heard,
 And listened to your sorrows.

Osm. Oh, treach’rous night !
 Thou lend’st thy ready veil to ev’ry treason,
 And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.
 “ Orasmin, prophet, reason, truth, and love !
 “ After such length of benefits, to wrong me !
 “ How have I over-rated, how mistaken,
 “ The merit of her beauty !—Did I not
 “ Forget I was a monarch ? Did I remember
 “ That Zara was a slave ?—I gave up all ;
 “ Gave up tranquility, distinction, pride,
 “ And fell the shameful victim of my love !

“ *Oras.* Sir, Sovereign, Sultan, my Imperial Master !
 “ Reflect on your own greatness, 121
 “ The distant provocation.”

Osm. Hark! Heardst thou nothing?

Oras. My lord!

Osm. A voice, like dying groans!

Oras. I listen, but can hear nothing.

Osm. Again!—look out—he comes——

Oras. Nor tread of mortal foot—nor voice I hear:
The still seraglio lies, profoundly plung'd
In death-like silence! nothing stirs.—The air
Is soft, as infant sleep, no breathing wing
Steals through the shadows, to awaken night.

Osm. Horrors a thousand times more dark than
these,

Benight my suff'ring soul——Thou dost not know
To what excess of tenderness I lov'd her:
I knew no happiness, but what she gave me,
Nor could have felt a mis'ry but for her!
Pity this weakness——mine are tears, Orasmin,
That fall not oft, nor lightly.——

Oras. Tears!——Oh, Heaven!

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“*Osm.* The first which ever yet unmann'd my
eyes!

“ Oh! pity Zara——pity me——Orasmin,

“ These but forerun the tears of destin'd blood.”

Oras. Oh, my unhappy lord!—I tremble for you—

Osm. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love;

At my revenge too, tremble——for 'tis due,

And will not be deluded.

Oras. Hark! I hear

The steps of men, along the neighb'ring wall!

Osm. Fly—seize him—'tis Nerestan! Wait no chains,

But drag him down to my impatient eye.

[Exit Orasmin.

Enter ZARA and SELIMA, in the dark.

Zar. Where art thou, Selima ? Give me thy hand.
It is so dark, I tremble as I step,
With fears and startings, never felt till now !

Osm. Damnation ! 'tis her voice ! the well-known
sound,
That has so often charm'd me into baseness !
“ Oli, the perfidious hypocrite !——she goes
“ To meet th' inviting infidel !——now, now,”

[Drawing a dagger.

Revenge, stand firm, and intercept his wishes ;—
Revenge ! On whom ?—No matter—Earth and
Heaven

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Would blush, should I forbear : now—Zara, now !

[Drops the Dagger.

I must not, cannot strike, the starting steel,
Unwilling, flies my hand, and shuns to wound her.

Zar. This is the private path—come nearer, lead
me—

Are we not notic'd, thinkst thou ?

Sel. Fear not, madam ;
It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.

Osm. That word has given me back my ebbing
rage—

[Recovers the dagger.

Zar. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes.
Who's there ?—Nerestan ! Is it you ?—O welcome—

Osm. [Stabbing her.] This to thy heart—'Tis not
the traitor meets thee,
'Tis the betray'd—who writes it in thy blood.

Zar. Oh, gracious Heaven! receive my parting
soul,

And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy—

[*Dies.*]

Osm. Soul!—then revenge has reach'd thee—I will
now

Haste from this fatal place—I cannot leave her!
Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?
Swallow me, earth!—She's silent—Zara's dead!
And should I live to see returning day, 79
'Twill shew me but her blood!—shew me left joyless,
In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,
But penitence and pain—And yet, 'twas just:—
Hark!—Destiny has sent her lover to me,
To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy.

Enter ORASMIN with NERESTAN.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than curs'd! come
near—

Thou who, in gratitude for freedom gain'd,
Hast giv'n me miseries beyond thy own!
Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!
“ Go—reap thy due reward, prepare to suffer,
“ Whate'er inventive malice can inflict,
“ To make thee feel thy death, and perish slow.”
Are my commands obey'd?

Oras. All is prepar'd.

Osm. Thy wanton eyes look round, in search of her,
Whose love, descending to a slave like thee,
From my dishonour'd hand receiv'd her doom.
See ! where she lies—

Ner. Oh, fatal, rash mistake !

Osm. Dost thou behold her, slave ?

Ner. Unhappy sister !

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Osm. Sister! — Didst thou say sister ? If thou
didst,

Bless me with deafness, Heaven !

Ner. Tyrant ! I did —

She was my sister — All that now is left thee,
Dispatch — From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal Christian blood :

Old Lusignan, expiring in my arms,
Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,
To his now murder'd daughter ! —

Would I had seen the bleeding innocent !

I would have liv'd to speak to her in death ;

Would have awaken'd in her languid heart,

A livelier sense of her abandon'd God :

That God, who left by her, forsook her too,
And gave the poor lost sufferer to thy rage.

Osm. Thy sister ! — Lusignan her father — Selima !
Can this be true ? — and have I wrong'd thee, Zara ?

Sel. Thy love was all the cloud, 'twixt her and
Heav'n !

Osm. Be dumb — for thou art base, to add distrac-
tion

To my already more than bleeding heart.

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And was thy love sincere?—What then remains?

Ner. Why should a tyrant hesitate on murder?
There now remains but mine, of all the blood
Which, through thy father's cruel reign and thine,
Has never ceas'd to stream on Syria's sands,
Restore a wretch to his unhappy race;
Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
Can force one feeble groan to feast thy anger.
I waste my fruitless words in empty air;
The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.

Osm. Oh, Zara!—

Oras. Alas, my lord, return—whither would grief
Transport your gen'rous heart?—This Christian
dog—

Osm. Take off his fetters, and observe my will:
To him, and all his friends, give instant liberty:
Pour a profusion of the richest gifts
On these unhappy Christians; and when heap'd
With vary'd benefits, and charg'd with riches,
Give 'em safe conduct to the nearest port. 249

Oras. But, Sir—

Osm. Reply not, but obey.—
Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command,
Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves
thee!

Go—lose no time—farewell—begone—and thou!
Unhappy warrior—yet less lost than I—
Haste from our bloody land—and to thy own,
Convey this poor, pale object of my rage.

Thy king, and all his Christians, when they hear
 Thy miseries, shall mourn 'em with their tears ;
 But, if thou tell'st 'em mine, and tell'st 'em truly,
 They who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.
 Take, too, this poniard with thee, which my hand
 Has stain'd with blood far dearer than my own ;
 Tell 'em—with this I murder'd her I lov'd ;
 The noblest and most virtuous among women !
 The soul of innocence, and pride of truth :
 Tell 'em I laid my empire at her feet :
 Tell 'em I plung'd my dagger in her blood ;
 Tell 'em, I so ador'd—and thus reveng'd her. 260

[Stabs himself.]

Rev'rence this hero—and conduct him safe. [Dies.]

Ner. Direct me, great inspirer of the soul !
 How should I act, how judge in this distress ?
 Amazing grandeur ! and detested rage !
 Ev'n I, amidst my tears, admire this foe,
 And mourn his death, who liv'd to give me woe.

[Exeunt omnes.]



EPILOGUE.

HERE, take a surfeit, Sirs, of being jealous,
And shun the pains that plague those Turkish fellows :
Where love and death join hands, their darts confounding :
Save us, good Heaven, from this new way of wounding.
Curs'd climate! where to cards a lone-left woman
Has only one of her black guards to summon!
Sighs, and sits mop'd, with her tame beast to gaze at :
And that cold treat, is all the game she plays at !
For, should she once some abler hand be trying,
Poniard's the word! and the first deal is—dying!

'Slife! shou'd the bloody whim get ground in Britain,
Where woman's freedom has such heights to sit on;
Dagger, provok'd, would bring on desolation :
And murder'd belles unpeople half the nation !—

Fain would I hope this play, to move compassion ;
And live to hunt suspicion out of fashion.—
Four motives strongly recommend the lover's
Hate of this weakness that our scene discovers.

First then —A woman will, or won't—depend on't:
If she will do't, she will :—and, there's an end on't.
But, if she won't—since safe and sound your trust is,
Fear is affront: and jealousy injustice.

*Next,—he who bids his dear do what she pleases,
Blunts wedlock's edge ; and all its torture eases :
For—not to feel your suff'rings, is the same,
As not to suffer :—All the diff'rence—name.*

*Thirdly—The jealous husband wrongs his honour ;
No wife goes lame, without some hurt upon her :
And the malicious world will still be guessing,
Who oft dines out, dislikes her own cook's dressing.*

*Fourth, and lastly,—to conclude my lecture,
If you would fix the inconstant wife—respect her.
She who perceives her virtues over-rated,
Will fear to have the account more justly stated :
And borrowing, from her pride, the good wife's seeming,
Grow really such—to merit your esteeming.*

A

COMIC CHORUS;

OR,

INTERLUDES,

DESIGNED TO BE SUNG BETWEEN THE ACTS OF

ZARÁ.

PROLOGUE.

By Mr. BEARD, and Mrs. CLIVE, from opposite entrances.

She. *So, Sir—you're a man of your word.*

He. *Who would break it, when summon'd by you?*

She. *Very fine that—but pray have you heard,
What it is you are summon'd to do?*

He. *Not a word—but expected to see
Something new in the musical way.*

She. *Why, this author has cast you and me,
As a Prologue, it seems, to his play.*

He. *What then is its tuneful name,
Robinhood of the Greenwood tree?
Or what good old ballad of fame
Has he built into tra-ge-dy?*

She. *Tho' he rails against songs, he thought fit,
Most gravely to urge and implore us,
In aid of his tragical wit,
To erect ourselves into a Chorus?* [Laughing.]

He. *A Chorus! what's that—a composing
Of groans, to the rants of his madness?*

She. *No—he hinders the boxes from dozing,
By mixing some spirit with sadness.*

He. *So then—'tis our task, I suppose,
To sing sober sense into relish.
Strike up, at each tragical close,
And unheeded moral embellish.*

She. *'Twas the custom, you know, once in Greece,
And if here 'tis not witty, 'tis new.*

He. *Well then, when you find an act cease,*

[Turning to the Boxes.

Tremble ladies—

She. *And, gentlemen, too—*

[To the men.

If I give not the beaux good advice,

[Merrily.

Let me dwindle to recitative!

He. *Nor will I to the belles be more nice,*

When I catch 'em, but here, to receive.

She. *If there's ought to be learnt from the play,*

I shall sit in a nook, here, behind,

Popping out in the good ancient way,

Now and then, with a piece of my mind.

He. *But suppose, that no moral should rise,*

Worth the ears of the brave or the fair!

She. *Why, we'll then give the word—and advise—*

Face about, and stand all as ye were.

AFTER THE FIRST ACT.

Song in Duet.

He. THE Sultan's a bridegroom—the slaves are set free.

And none must presume to wear fetters but he !

Before honey-moon,
Love's fiddle's in tune ;

So we think (silly souls !) 'tis always to be :

For the man that is blind—how should he foresee !

She. I hate these hot blades, who so fiercely begin;
To baulk a rais'd hope is a cowardly sin !

The maid that is wise, let her always procure

Rather a grave than a spirited woer :

What she loses at breakfast, at supper she'll win.

But your amorous violence never endures :

For to dance without doors

Is the way to be weary, before we get in.

He. Pray how does it happen, that passion so gay,
Blooms, fades, and falls away,

Like the rose of this morn, that at night must decay?

Woman, I fear,

Does one thing appear,

But is found quite another, when look'd on too near.

She. Ah—no—

Not—so—

'Tis the fault of you men, who, with flames of desire

Set your palates on fire,

And dream not, that eating—will appetite tire ;

So resolve in your heat,
 To do nothing, but eat,
 'Till, alas! on a sudden—you sleep o'er your meat!
 Therefore, learn, O ye fair!—

He. And, you lovers, take care—

She. That you trust not before-hand—

He. That you trust not at all.

She. Man was born to deceive.

He. Woman form'd to believe.

Both. Trust not one of us all!

For to stand on sure ground is the way not to fall.

AFTER THE SECOND ACT.

Mrs. CLIVE (sola) to a flute.

I.

OH, jealousy! thou bane of bleeding love?

Ah, how unhappy we!

Doom'd by the partial powers above,

Eternal slaves to thee!

Not more unstaid than lovers' hearts the wind!

This moment dying—and the next unkind.

Ah! wavering, weak desires of frail mankind!

With pleading passion ever to pursue,

Yet triumph, only to undo.

II.

Go to the deeps, below, thou joyless fiend,

And never rise again to sow despair!

Nor you, ye heedless fair, occasions lend,
To blast your blooming hopes, and bring on care.
Never conclude your innocence secure,
Prudence alone makes love endure.

[*As she is going off, he meets her, and pulls her back, detaining her, while he sings what follows.*]

He. Ever, ever, doubt the fair in sorrow,
Mourning, as if they felt compassion :
Yet what they weep for to-day—to-morrow,
They'll be first to laugh into fashion.
None are betray'd, if they trust not the charmer ;
Jealousy guards the weak from falling ;
Would you never catch—you must oft alarm her,
Hearts to deceive is a woman's calling.

[*After the song, he lets her go, and they join in a duet.*]

She. Come let us be friends, and no longer abuse,
Condenin, and accuse,
Each other.

He. Would you have us agree, you must fairly confess,
The love we caress,
We smother.

She. I am loth to think that—

He. Yet, you know, it is true ;

She. Well—what if I do,
No matter.

He. Could you teach us a way to love on, without
strife ?

She. Suit the first part of life
To the latter.

He. 'Tis an honest advice; for when love is new blown,
 Gay colours are shown,
 Too glaring.

She. Then alas, for poor wives!—comes a blust'ring
 day,
 And blows 'em away,
 Most searing!

AFTER THE THIRD ACT.

By Mr. BEARD alone.

MARK, oh, ye beauties!—gay, and young,
 Mark the painful woes and weeping,
 That from forc'd concealment sprung,
 Punish the sin of secret-keeping.
 Tell then—nor veil a willing heart,
 When the lover, lov'd alarms it;
 But—to sooth the pleasing smart,
 Whisper the glowing wish that warms it.
 She that would hide the gentle flame,
 Does but teach her hope to languish;
 She that boldly tells her aim,
 Flies from the path that leads to anguish.
 Not that too far your trust should go;
 All that you say—to all discover;
 All that you do—but two should know,
 One of 'em you, and one your lover.

[*She meets him going off.*

She. Ah! man, thou wert always a traitor,
 Thou giv'st thy advice to betray;
 Ah! forn'd for a rover by nature,
 Thou leader of love the wrong way.
 Would women let women advise them,
 They could not so easily stray,
 'Tis trusting to lovers supplies 'em
 With will and excuse to betray.
 She's safe, who, in guard of her passion,
 Far, far, from confessing her pain,
 Keeps silence, in spite of the fashion,
 Nor suffers her eyes to explain.

*AFTER THE FOURTH ACT.**Duet.*

She. WELL, what do you think——of these sorrows
 and joys,
 These calms, and these whirlwinds—this silence and
 noise?
 Which love, in the bosom of man, employs?
He. For my part, would lovers be govern'd by me,
 Not one of you women so wish'd-for should be.
 Since here we a proof of your mischief see.
She. Why, what would you do to escape the distress?
He. I would do—I would do—by my soul I can't
 guess—
She. Poor wretch, by my soul, I imagin'd no less.

Come, come—let me tell you, these tempests of love,
Did but blow up desire, its briskness to prove,
Which else would—you know—too lazily move.
Were women like logs of a make to lie still;
Men would sleep and grow dull—but our absolute will
Sets life all a whirling, like wheels in a mill.

He. Ambition in woman, like valour in man,
Tempts danger—from which they'd be safe if they ran:
And once get 'em in—get 'em out how you can.

She. Pray, what will you give me to teach you the
trick,

To keep your wife pleas'd, either healthy or sick?

He. The man who hits that, sure, must touch to the
quick!

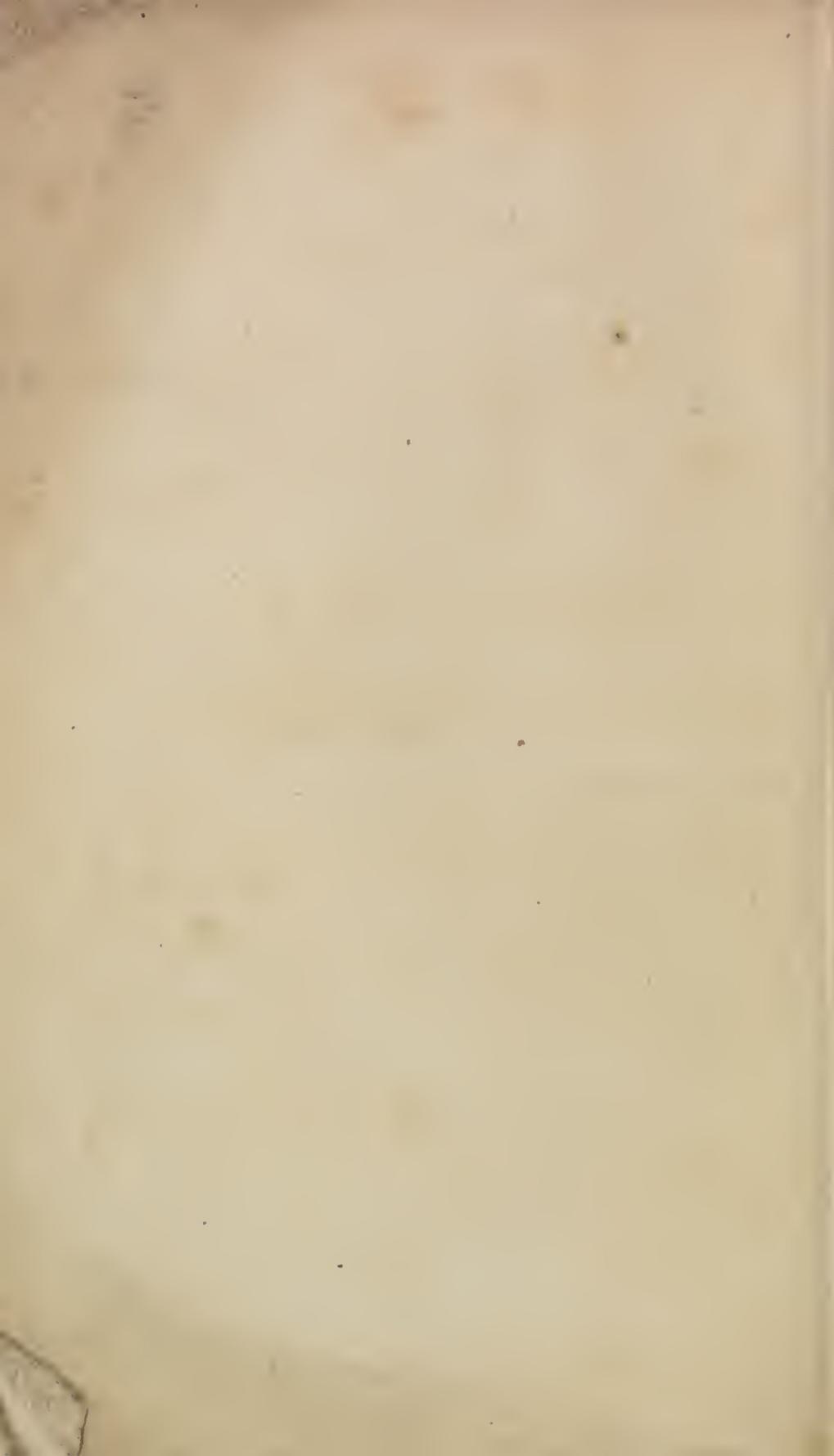
She. Learn this—and depend on a life without pain,
Say nothing to vex her, yet let her complain;
Submit to your fate—and disturb not her reign:
Be mop'd when she's sad—and be pleas'd when she's
gay,

Believe her, and trust her—and give her—her way:
For want of this rule—there's the devil to pay.

Both. For want of this rule—there's the devil to pay.

THE END.





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